

12-1-1983

Evangelical Visitor - December, 1983 Vol. 96. No. 12

Glen A. Pierce

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Recommended Citation

Pierce, Glen A., "Evangelical Visitor - December, 1983 Vol. 96. No. 12" (1983). *Evangelical Visitor* (1887-1999). 2472.

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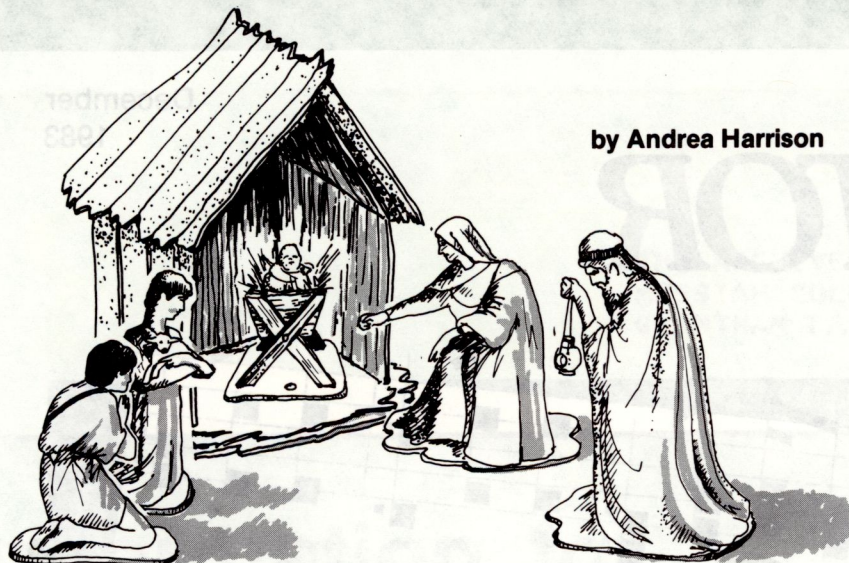
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VISITOR

pp

Silent Night

Silent night! holy night!
 Son of God, love's pure light
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace—
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.



by Andrea Harrison

A baby in the house

"Christmas. I almost hate it!" thought Clarissa as she snapped shut the last suitcase. Away from home again; spending money on things we can't afford for people who don't need them anyway; traveling hundreds of miles on ice-covered freeways; being too busy and tired to enjoy the season. . .

She pondered the past few frantic days as she pulled the sack lunch from the refrigerator and bundled Jenny into her coat and mittens. Cookies to bake for Sam's school party, Christmas programs at church, sewing the kids' angel costumes, last-minute shopping. But it was all done. A few more days and Christmas would be over. Relief and guilt mingled uncomfortably as she felt herself longing for the peace of a post-season routine.

"Everything ready to go?" queried Ron, his enthusiasm unrestrained now that his office doors were closed for a full week. "Kids all packed? Let's go. What's the hold-up?"

"What's the hold-up?" Clarissa mumbled as she scowled her way past him out the door. I didn't see you helping with anything this week, she reflected, but, regretting the thought, let it go unsaid.

"Smile, honey, it's Christmas," Ron offered, with encouragement in his voice, but warning in his glance. "Here we go to Grandma's. We're off!" Jenny and Sam squealed with delight.

As Ron backed the station wagon down the drive, Clarissa closed her eyes and rested her head back against the seat. Smile! Another Christmas. Another

meaningless, chaotic Christmas. "Lord, please help me through it. Help us all . . ."

"Just about there. About another hour, kids." Clarissa heard Ron's announcement through a daze of sleep. The radio piped the strains, ". . . and heaven and nature sing. . . He rules the world with truth and grace. . ."

Ironical, thought Clarissa, frustrated that sleep had not improved her negative outlook. This station never carries a word about the Christian message any other time of the year. Just like the bookstore in town. It refuses to sell Christian literature, but always decorates for Christmas: holiday cookbooks, children's Bibles, Christmas cards, the works.

"Turn off the radio, Ron."

"Why, honey? I like the music."

"I'm sick of it. Turn it off, please!"

Ron turned his head in anger and surprise. "You're going to do it again, aren't you?" his angry voice flared. "You're going to ruin Christmas!"

In the uneasy silence, tears rose in Clarissa's eyes. She was glad it was dark. Ruin Christmas? I guess I have, she repeated to herself with utter defeat. Why can't I just accept the way everybody flocks to the biggest birthday party in the world and then completely forgets about Jesus a few days later? They use him and abuse his name. How can I be happy when the world is so lost?

In the dark throughout the countryside, sparkles of colored lights darted past, arrayed on house after house. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." Clarissa wondered if those people really under-

stood. Closer to the city, the lights cast an eerie yellow brilliance against the clouds above.

"No star to guide tonight, Lord," she prayed silently. "Oh, God, please forgive my attitude and help me when we get home. Dad will never understand if I'm down. Don't you want him to see the joy of Christmas in me? Don't you want him to understand what Christmas is really about? While the world—believing or not—celebrates our Jesus' birth, couldn't you please open one old man's eyes?"

The children slept soundly as Ron turned into the long drive and pulled up in front of the house. In the quiet, Clarissa sat a moment, stiff from the ride, and gazed at the house. "Something's wrong, Ron. The house is dark. Dad always puts out lights." Her stomach tightened. She scanned the windows for signs of the little artificial tree trimmed with blue lights that always sat nearby.

"There's no tree. Something must be wrong. There's not even a wreath on the door. Let's go in."

Ron tapped the car horn, picked up sleeping Jennifer, and followed Clarissa and Sam up the walk. Grandma opened the door wide and, with her usual sweet greeting, exchanged hugs and kisses in the porch light.

Flushed with fear, Clarissa anxiously asked, "Where's Dad?"

"He's sleeping, honey. He's had a long day." They tiptoed into the family room where grandfather lay sleeping soundly, a Bible open across his chest. Clarissa gave her mother a questioning look. With a smile, Grandma motioned them into the next room.

"Notice anything different around here?"

"Why, yes," Ron offered. "No lights, no tree, no candles—nothing like you usually have out when we come. Has Grandpa finally put a stop to even that?"

"Yes, Ron, he has," Grandma replied serenely. "He finally realized it was all meaningless to him."

"But, Mom, how can you be so calm?"

Ron turned his head in anger and surprise.

"You're going to do it again, aren't you?" his angry voice flared.

"You're going to ruin Christmas."

Andrea Harrison is the pen name of a Brethren in Christ writer living in the midwest.

All these years you've prayed for Daddy, and now this?" Clarissa fought back more tears.

"Oh, I don't think you quite understand, Clar. Come here and I'll show you something." She led them into the dining room where they found a small, dimstore manager scene, simply displayed on the table. "You see, children, Grandpa didn't want the usual trappings of Christmas this year." Her voice faltered. "He said it would disturb the baby in the house."

"What baby?" puzzled Ron.

With glowing face, Grandma exclaimed, "Grandpa! He's the baby. Your daddy has accepted the Lord. And he said to me, 'Grandma, it's time to start over. All these years, we have celebrated the Savior's coming with stuff. It's time to get rid of the stuff and find the Christ-child.' So we're starting over. We are going to surround ourselves this Christmas only with the things that have real meaning to us: our children and grandchildren, a simple baby Jesus, and the love of the greatest story ever told. Then, in years to come, Grandpa wants to add other symbols and customs, but only as they come to have special meaning for us as Christians."

They all stood in amazed silence. For Clarissa, there came a sudden and powerful collapse of confusion and bitterness. But the words of relief came with difficulty. "Mom, you've waited so long. Maybe I never did believe anything could reach Daddy. Forgive me that my faith was so small."

"My dear, it was God who had to wait so long," Grandma whispered. "We just had to keep asking."

Suddenly the sound of a radio interrupted the stillness. "It's 'Joy to the World,' Mommy," offered Sam, recognizing the song. Ron shifted the still sleeping Jennifer to Clarissa's arms. Swooping Sam into the air, he declared, "Hey, let's go see the baby. Sounds like he's awake."

Confused, but excited, little Sam asked, "Baby Jesus? Is baby Jesus really here?"

They all laughed out loud. "Yes, honey," Clarissa said, as much to herself as to Sam. "He's here this Christmas more than ever before."

Just then Grandpa appeared in the hallway. "Well, it's about time you folks got here to this birthday party! Merry Christmas!"

Ron and Clarissa exchanged forgiving grins. "Yes, it certainly is—the merriest ever." ■

evangelical VISITOR

The Official Publication of the Brethren in Christ Church

December 1983

Vol. 96, No. 12

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EVANGELICAL VISITOR (ISSN 0745-0486) is published monthly by Evangel Press, 301 N. Elm Street (P.O. Box 166), Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Member of Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group. Biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New International Version.

Editor: Glen A. Pierce; Missions Page Editor: Phil Byers; Christian Education Page Editor: Harriet Bicksler. Brethren in Christ Publication Board: Dwight E. Bert, Louis O. Cober, James W. Esh, Lester C. Fretz, Emerson Frey, Paul E. Witter, John Yeatts.

Mailing Information: All correspondence, manuscripts and subscriptions should be addressed to the Editor, Evangelical Visitor, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Changes of address should include both the old and new addresses.

U.S. Subscriptions: 1 year—\$7.00; 2 years—\$13.50; 3 years—\$20.00; 5 years—\$32.50. New and Gift: \$6.00 a year. Lifetime: \$125.00.

Canadian Subscriptions (in Canadian funds): 1 year—\$8.00; 2 years—\$15.00; 3 years—\$22.00; 5 years—\$36.00. New and Gift: \$7.00. Lifetime: \$140.00.

Overseas airmail rates available upon request.

Second-class postage paid at Nappanee, IN 46550-0166. Printed in U.S.A.



All those in favor of planning a saner Christmas raise your right fist.

Christmas customs are very hard masters. They command us to buy cards that cost more and mean less. They demand that we lick stamps and address envelopes to those who sent us cards last year and we have forgotten who some of them are. They cause us to waste time and money, to ask ridiculous questions like, "What will I ever give that person who has everything?" and "How can I be sure the gifts I give cost about the same as those I receive?"

Christmas customs decree that we walk the streets and pound the pavement, use credit cards galore and pay later, perhaps with high interest and low self-esteem. (Pay now with aching feet, tired bones, feverish spirits.) There is slave-type meal preparation and "waist-full" consumption of food as celebrations of "this holy season." And it is sad that we are glad when Christmas is over.

Personal notes of love.

Perhaps we are ready for some different planning. We may decide to write

Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus, Harrisonburg, Va., notes that she enjoys "a family 'tribe' of 18, including 8 grandchildren."

brief letters of thanks to those who were the most helpful in the past year. Short, personal notes of appreciation and affection to family members and friends could nourish the spirit much more than an expensive card or gift. "I will plan to spend one hour or more with you each week" (day, month) would be a treasured gift of time.

We will not omit modest gifts and surprises to delight the hearts of children but they could willingly enter into a kind of "apprenticeship in unselfishness" as they take part in the family process of cutting down on things for ourselves so that more money can be given for those who lack the bare necessities of life. Planners of family doings may decide to announce that gifts for adults will be either cut out or drastically cut down in number and cost and that, instead, an offering be taken for those who are in need.

Real family sharing.

We have decided that potluck meals, with their shared responsibility for all and drudgery for none, are appropriate at Christmas time. Once as our three-generation family had a series of meals together, teams of two took responsibility for the different meals and dishwashing. While doing dishes, a young husband and father conceived the notion that there should be just one big dish of food at each meal! Besides less time for dishwashing, such a plan could mean less time for food preparation and more time for family fellowship.

Our family clan, including children and grandchildren, had gathered from different states. At the Christmas dinner a daughter said, "I dreamed last night that we were all together at the table and we went around the circle telling what was going on in our lives." She suggested, "Let's do that with the understanding that anyone who wishes to may 'pass.'"

Then followed a time of sharing about courses of study finished, the insecurities of getting into new work, budget problems, human relations problems, demands and satisfactions of work in the church. A number said they had entirely too much stress in their lives. A son-in-law spoke of new appreciation for his father with whom he had had recent conversations about spiritual things.

The gifts exchanged that year are not remembered, only the gift of shared experiences with each other.

A program of family stories, skits, poetry and the like were just as enjoyable as gifts, also. As Grandmother read from the late Grandfather's diary words he wrote on the day each child was born to them, family roots went down a little deeper for children and grandchildren.

Snatches of old family letters were shared. A small girl had asked back then, "Why did God make snakes if they bite people so bad?" Of a noisy fleet of airplanes overhead, a small boy said, "They sounded like a million cats hollering!" A pint-sized grandchild, while counting numbers, stopped to ask, "Do the numbers ever stop or do they just keep on going?" While viewing a childhood picture of her father she asked, "Where was I when Daddy was a little boy?"

And the skit. Who can forget the makeshift tent, the mother and children huddled inside against the noises of the wilderness night (produced by the father and the other children)?

Being family to others.

When people who need us are included in our family celebrations, they may contribute more to our lives than we do to theirs. On one occasion the international people with us enlarged the coasts of our minds and hearts. An African nursing student, with her two little ones beside her at the table, prayed

movingly in Swahili. During the gift exchange our Jewish friend gave one of his choice sweaters to our Arab friend, a college student from West Bank. (If only that act could be a symbol of large scale efforts toward peace in the Middle East, we thought.)

At another time, Sho-ming contributed much when he cooked a Chinese meal for us, when he gave out small gifts from China, when he shared experiences as a family man and college teacher during the cultural revolution in China, when he listened with us to the moving Christmas story in Luke 2.

The way of calmness.

As we grasp more and more the profound meaning of that story of God's love, we develop a depth, a calmness that rejects the extravagant, frenzied kind of life. Someone has said, "The person who begins to live more seriously within will live more simply without."

*... an answer to
our Christmas sins
of exhaustion,
extravagance, and
exclusiveness.*

As we meditate deeply on the meaning of God's love-gift of his Son to us, as we know God's forgiveness and the joy of new life in Christ and in the church body of Christ, deep changes will occur within us that will affect all of life. This will be the answer to our Christmas sins of exhaustion, extravagance and exclusiveness.

The angel's words, "Fear not," will

calm our own fears today. "... tidings of great joy to all people" will mean a keen personal joy that just must be shared. "Unto you ... a Savior ... Christ the Lord" will captivate us personally and become the center of our being. "Glory to God in the highest" becomes the lively praise-hymn of our own hearts. "... peace to men (and women) of good will" becomes a reality to us and a mandate to live out and carry forth God's message of love by his strong Spirit in us.

God with us. Quiet meditation. Fer-vent praise. Heart-felt forgiveness. Peace and the things that make for peace. Deep joy. Family fellowship. Church family fellowship. Belonging. Being family to others. Responsible spending and entertaining. Compassionate giving. Words of forgiving love. A gesture of reconciliation. Opening the fist and reaching, reaching out in love to those who need us.

This is Christmas. ■

the GOD *of* PEACE

The names given to God by the Apostle Paul in his letters are not only interesting but also quite significant. Each different name speaks of some attribute of God. As he closes chapter fifteen of Romans, Paul says, "The God of peace be with you all. Amen."

More than seven hundred years before Christ's birth, God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write, "He will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

We know who this was, for Isaiah had said, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given." And earlier, he had said, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (God with us) (Isaiah 7:14).

When the angel came to Mary, she was told to call her baby Jesus (Jehovah is salvation). The angel went on to say that her son would also be called the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:31, 32). And when the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of the Christ child, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men" (Luke 2:14, KJV). We have no reason to doubt that it was Jesus that Isaiah was writing about.

To the church at Colosse, Paul explains what this is

all about—why this son was given. "God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Jesus Christ), and through him to reconcile to himself all things" (Colossians 1:19, 20).

We are by nature at war with God. We were alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works, Paul says, yet God has reconciled us. Let us read Colossians 1:20-23 from the *Living Bible*:

It was through what his Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to him—all things in heaven and earth—for Christ's death on the cross has made peace with God for all by his blood. This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies and hated him and were separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions, yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through the death on the cross of his own human body, and now as a result Christ has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are standing there before him with nothing left against you—nothing left that he could even chide you for; the only condition is that you fully believe the Truth, standing in it steadfast and firm, strong in the Lord, convinced of the Good News that Jesus died for you, and never shifting from trusting him to save you.

Yes, Jesus Christ is our peace. Without him there is no peace, personally or in the world. Make the God of peace the Lord of your life and the "peace of God which passeth understanding" shall rule your life. For he is the Prince of Peace.

—C. R. Heisey, Upland, Calif.

HOW ^{to} GRANDPARENT *and be appreciated* [↑]

E. J. Swalm

"Hi Grandpa! How are you?" Whether you hear that greeting on the telephone or face to face with a thoughtful grandchild, it has a distinct fascination for a normal grandparent.

I am speaking from personal experience as a grateful grandfather of eight devoted grandchildren and a number of lively greatgrands. Since it is a human characteristic to want to be appreciated, my wife joins me in admitting our mutual desire.

In any sphere of life, respect is something to be commanded rather than demanded. Certainly there are numbers of persons or agencies with a key role in instilling in children good manners and graceful habits toward their seniors. Nevertheless, as grandparental beings we must not divert ourselves from the obligation of meriting such favor.

A friend of mine who is also a grandfather was saved when nine years of age. In telling about it, his mother said he explained, "This is wonderful; it is almost as good as going to grandpa's." That would obviously describe the kind of a grandfather he had.

We do well to remind ourselves of the importance of maintaining wholesome family relations in a strife-torn society. The continuous changes that time imposes on our customs and methods, whether we like them or not, need to be recognized. Every generation lives in a different social atmosphere.

We naturally delight in giving gifts to children and especially to those who call us grandpa. Our benevolence needs rugged control in avoiding over-indulgence, whether it be in quality, quantity or frequency. It may sometimes contravene the wishes of their parents. Consistency coupled with utter kindness contribute to the memory of gifts and giver.

Our task is somewhat departmental-

E. J. and Maggie Swalm are the parents of four children; they also have eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. They are members of the Stayner (Ont.) congregation.



Ernie and Maggie Swalm with four of their great-grandchildren. From left to right: Ryan Mark, Shawn Walker, Michael Walker, and Sally Mark.

ized by the varied age groups, their resident location, and environment. The reality of the time-worn cliches, "Distance lends enchantment," "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," and "Familiarity breeds contempt" can provide germs of misunderstanding and suspicion. The exercise of good judgment and a passion for fair play can reduce to a minimum the potential friction between those living on the same street or those in a distant town.

Then before we realize it, they are teens. They are in the crosscurrents of those turbulent years. They will appreciate some of our advice when solicited, if tactfully given and pressured by love, honesty and genuineness. How do we show interest in their varied activities which now possess them so enthusiastically? We can be prompt to compliment them sincerely on their school promotions. When possible and practical, we can attend their sports competitions. While it is a more delicate subject, their

social attractions also deserve our sacred concern. But we should avoid obnoxious inquisitiveness, which is never appreciated.

The art of successful grandparenting is something we who are in this favored category should covet earnestly. Many affectionate grandparents have left unforgettable memories which will inevitably bear fruit. Someone said, "Kindness is the most difficult thing to give away because it usually returns." The response from these young lives, with few exceptions, is assured. Their respect consists in what they say and what they don't say, what they do and do not do.

Grandparents who love the Lord, and through whom the Holy Spirit operates freely, have the added opportunity of inclining the hearts of their dear ones to serve the Lord. Fellow grandparents, let us ask God to help us live selflessly, keep our vision clear, and our motives pure. Then our grandchildren will rise up and call us blessed.

BOOKS for GRANDPARENTS

reviewed
by Harriet Bicksler

Some people have grown up with grandparents under the same roof or living in a house just down the street. Some have had long-distance grandparents who visited or were visited only occasionally. And some have never known their grandparents at all; before they were born or were old enough to remember them, their grandparents died.

Whether or not grandparents (or great-grandparents) are closely involved in the lives of their grandchildren depends on many variables. The chances are, however, that most grandparents, particularly Christian ones who care about passing on their heritage of faith, would like to establish close, caring bonds with their grandchildren. Sometimes that "comes naturally," but often it happens only as the result of a lot of effort.

Much has been said about the demise of the traditional family and about the fragmentation that occurs when family members are apart from one another, either because of separation and divorce or the mobile society in which we live. To help parents raise happy and healthy children in spite of the many pressures we face, many books on parenting have been written. Not much, however, has been written to help grandparents. Perhaps this is because everyone assumes that grandparents know instinctively what to do with their grandchildren.

Whatever the reason for the dearth of suggestions for grandparents, the situation is changing. One important factor in that change is likely the emphasis these days on making the most of the latter years of life, whether by good health care, being involved in varied activities, or by being a good grandparent.

What do children think about their grandmas and grandpas? How do grandparents feel about being involved in the lives of their children's children? What do they wish they knew about how

children act or about how they can help with the big and little problems of growing up? What are the grandparenting pitfalls to be avoided? What can grandparents provide for children that their own parents can't? These questions and many others are answered in part by three books written especially for grandparents. What follows are quick reviews of these books, each of which would be an appropriate and thoughtful gift for your favorite grandparent.

Dale Evans Rogers with Carole C. Carlson. Grandparents Can. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1983.

Dale Evans Rogers, well-known as a television and show business personality, wife of Roy Rogers of cowboy

movie and roast beef sandwich fame, and author of many best-selling inspirational books, is well qualified to write about grandparenting. She is the mother of nine, grandmother of nineteen, and great-grandmother of six.

Rogers gives a lot of practical advice out of her own experience for handling grandchildren—from putting away breakable knickknacks when little ones visit to going shopping to giving gifts. In addition, there are three particular strengths to this book. First, Rogers writes as an evangelical Christian, and from that perspective she emphasizes the role that grandparents can have in bringing children to faith in Christ. Second, she is a strong advocate of the Foster Grandparent program (one of First Lady Nancy Reagan's special projects through which elderly people are

to page 8, please

Flickering candlelight, blazing hearths, bountiful tables—all spell holiday cheer. But loneliness is what the holiday season means to many elderly people.

Whether in homes of their own or in homes for the aging, many older people will spend the holidays alone.

Add to your own holiday pleasure this year. Messiah Village urges you to visit an "old friend." We'll guarantee you'll give—and receive—the best gift of all . . . LOVE.

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Harriet Bicksler, Harrisburg, Pa., is the Christian Education page editor for the Visitor.



BOOKS for GRANDPARENTS

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able to "adopt" needy children. A third strength is her positive attitude toward aging: "It's beautiful to reach the age when you can quit pressing to prove yourself, where you can be your own self, the person God created, with no apologies."

The book's main weakness is its loose structure. However, what it lacks in organization and style is made up in its up-beat approach to the joys of being a grandparent. Rogers has interwoven her own experiences with those of other grandparents and has created a valuable resource. The book ends with an appendix listing books and records which teach Christian values and which can be given to children of all ages.

Charlie W. Shedd. *Grandparents.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1976.

The full title to Shedd's book is *Then God Created Grandparents And It Was*

Very Good. The author is a minister, lecturer, and family counselor who also wrote the two popular pre-marital guides, *Letters to Karen* and *Letters to Philip*. He too is a grandparent.

Grandparents is a book with visual appeal. The text is interspersed generously with white spaces and full-page photographs of older people interacting with children. Divided into three major sections, the book delivers vignettes on grandparenting from many different people. These three sections are: "What Are Grandparents For?" ("Grandparents are for telling you what it used to be like, but not too much"); "What My Grandparents Taught Me" ("My grandfather is the smartest man I know"); and "What Grandparents Tell Me to Tell Other Grandparents" ("I think it's important we make them behave").

In the epilogue, Shedd also stresses the way in which grandparents can be good examples of married love and of mature faith. In the frenzy that characterizes so much of modern life, grandparents can be a stabilizing and quieting influence:

"Sometimes when it is quiet, they will even talk to you about heaven."

Fitzhugh Dodson with Paula Reuben. *How to Grandparent.* New York: New American Library, 1981.

Written by a well-known psychologist and best-selling author of *How to Parent*, *How to Father*, and *How to Discipline with Love*, this book on grandparenting is the most comprehensive of the three reviewed. Dodson's expressed purpose is "to sound a trumpet for establishing what I call 'the new extended family'." To do that, he first of all defines a grandparent as a "unique kind of *emotionally involved, part-time parent without pressure*," and then describes the variety of family circumstances in which a grandparent may be called upon to help.

The book is in four parts. Part One, "Becoming a Grandparent," includes tips on talking with and disciplining (teaching) children. The second part, "Ages and Stages," details the developmental tasks of children from infancy through adolescence and offers hints on how to understand and handle the various stages. Part Three, "Special Aspects of Grandparenting," deals with such topics as visiting, gift-giving, sibling rivalry, etc. The fourth part is a comprehensive list of recommended toys, play equipment, and children's books and records.

While *How to Grandparent* is the best organized and most complete of the three books reviewed here, it lacks the Christian dimension of the other two. However, even though it is written from a completely secular perspective, it offers very valuable and helpful insights into the tasks of grandparenting.

The three books also have several things in common. All are written in a light, informal, easy-to-read style by people who are qualified either by experience or training to write about grandparenting. All include numerous anecdotes and comments by both children and grandparents on what being a grandma or a grandpa to someone means. And all three acknowledge the need for grandparents to help provide a sense of history for their grandchildren. Perhaps one of the greatest legacies that grandparents can leave to their descendants is a feeling of belonging, of having a place in history, of being one significant link in a long chain of significant people. Rogers, Shedd and Dodson help to show us how to do that. ■

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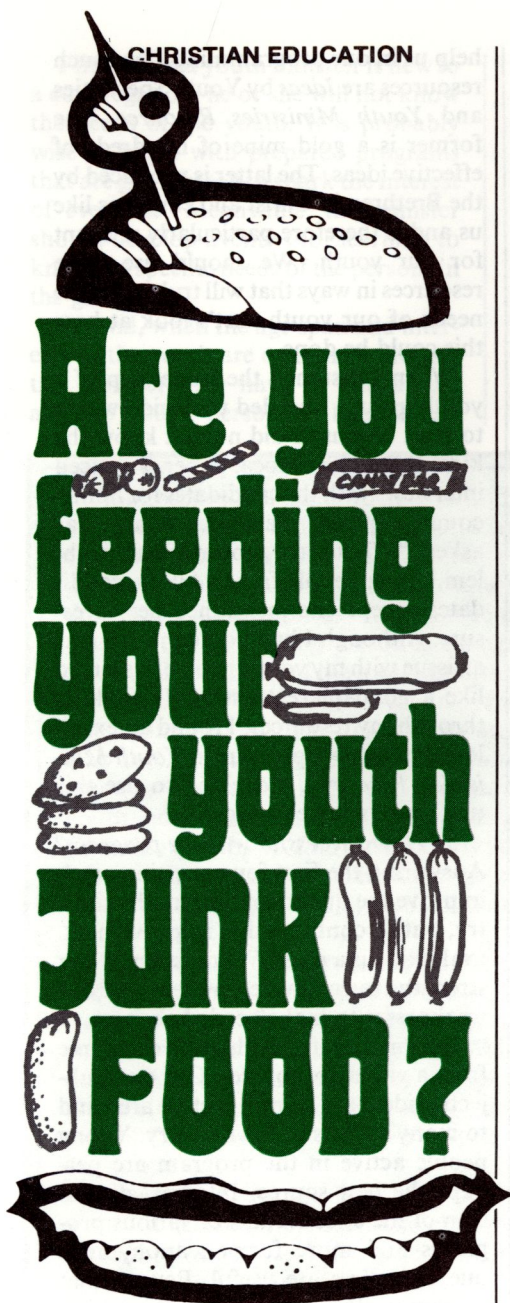
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by John R. Yeatts

When moving into a new area, one of the first things many people do is check out the restaurants. They may ask new acquaintances where the best place to eat is, or they may eat in some of the most attractive restaurants to try them out.

Upon moving to Pennsylvania three years ago, we found that there were sev-

John Yeatts is a member of the faculty of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., specializing in the area of Christian education. Prior to that, he was associate director of the denomination's Board of Christian Education.

eral restaurants with established reputations in the area. The restaurants feature extensive menus—with a variety of delicious food from which to choose. Even the most finicky eater can find something to his taste.

In our three years in Pennsylvania, two fast-food chains have built restaurants in our area—one in our town and another five miles down the road. These new restaurants have limited menus which can be contained on a sign displayed above the counter. The food at both fast-food restaurants is quite mediocre. Yet, these places have their appeal. In the first place, they are quick; the sandwiches are already made. Second, the restaurants are less expensive than others in the community. Third, they are predictable; "Big Macs" taste the same in Pennsylvania as they did in Indiana.

Glenn E. Ludwig, a successful youth minister who now serves as chaplain at Susquehanna University, has written the book *Building an Effective Youth Ministry*. One chapter in that book is entitled "The Cafeteria of the Fast Food Chain." He opens the chapter with the following description.

Three youth were walking down the hall one day at school discussing their church's youth program. They were sharing what their meetings were like.

"We meet every Sunday night," Sara Allison reported. "And at each meeting we have devotions, Bible study, and a business meeting. We're trying to get more kids involved, so we're thinking about changing our meetings. But we don't know what to do. What are the meetings like at your youth group, Sally?"

"They're different each time we go," responded Sally Grosh, a member of a youth group from a neighboring church. "Sometimes we go places, or have parties. We don't do the same thing each week. In fact, we don't meet each week. A schedule is sent to us with the date and events. It's never the same but almost always fun."

"Well, I wish our group did something—anything!" Betty Brown chimed in. "We get together, and somebody asks, 'What do you want to do?' and everyone just sits there like dummies. It's really a bore. No one comes anymore because we don't do anything."

These three girls describe youth groups that have quite different approaches. Sara's youth group represents fast food

ministry; the program is pretty much the same each time. Sally's youth group represents a cafeteria approach to youth ministry; there is variety and flexibility. Betty's youth group represents the "What do you want to do?" approach; this approach completely lacks direction and is therefore probably the least effective of the three programs.

Are we offering our young people junk food or a nutritious diet? Are we merely taking canned programs out of youth ministry books and offering them to our teenagers without considering whether they will meet the spiritual needs of our youth? Do our youth meetings follow the same pattern every week and fail to maintain the interests of the group?

The alternative is to offer a nutritious diet based on the spiritual, psychological, and social needs of the youth in our churches. Yet, this will not be quick and easy. It takes much less effort to use canned programs prepared by others. For those of us willing to exert the

**In our youth programs,
we need to minister
to the spiritual,
physical, psychological
and social needs of
our young people.**

effort, here are some questions to answer in the process of developing an effective ministry to youth.

1. *Who are the people in your youth group?* When preparing a meal for company, it is helpful to know what your guests like. Similarly, when preparing a youth program, it is helpful to know the interests and preferences of your young people. The youth in your group are probably different from the one to which I minister. Some are loud and boisterous. Some like sports. Others like music. On the other hand, other youth are shy, are scared to death of being chosen last for the volleyball game, or never go to youth group when the music groups come to the church because they do not enjoy music (or at least a certain style of music). It is the youth minister's task to find out what

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JUNK FOOD?

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his youth are like. That can only be done through being with them as much as possible, in as many different settings as possible.

2. *What are the needs of the youth?*

Once we have determined who our youth are, we can begin to identify their needs. There are some needs that are common to all youth. To give some examples, teens need the approval of their peers and independence from their parents, they need the chance to think through issues related to faith and life, and they need the discovery of who they are as persons. The young person who goes to the movies with his friends when his parents want him to go to church is demonstrating the need to move from parents to peers. The teenager who laughs at the trivial lessons she gets in Sunday School is evidencing a need to deal with real faith-life issues. The young person who spends hours on the telephone is really trying to find out what he or she is like and whether or not that is acceptable to others. (See my article, "The Changes of Youth," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 10, 1978, p. 12, for a more complete description of the needs of youth.)

Yet, we can know the needs that are common to teens and still not be able to minister effectively to the kids in our youth groups. The reason is that our youth are unique. Their needs are similar to but not identical to the youth in the church down the street. We need to understand their unique needs.

3. *What do I want to accomplish in this group?* When the needs of the group are determined, the youth leader begins to set goals for the group. The lack of goals is probably the most common failure in youth ministry. This may be the result of oversight or laziness, but it may also be out of a concern to meet the needs of the youth. Some youth leaders refuse to set goals, because the program should emanate from young people themselves and their needs.

Nevertheless, a youth ministry needs leaders who set goals. A high percentage of youth group dropouts said that the major reason they left was a lack of good leadership. Young people will not be able to objectively identify their own needs and develop programs to meet these needs. Anyone who has asked a group of youth "What do you want to

do?" knows that this is not an effective program planning strategy. Youth need leaders who get close enough to them to learn what their needs are and assume responsibility for planning programs related to these needs.

In line with some of the needs mentioned, goals for a youth program might include:

- a. The youth will participate in social activities with other Christian youth.
- b. They will discuss some of the vital ethical and religious issues they are encountering at school.
- c. They will value themselves as children of God.

These goals could serve as a basis for youth programming. Yet, the goals for each group will be different, depending on the needs unique to that group of youth.

4. *What programs will best meet our goals?* The programs planned for young people should be based on the goals developed. That means that programming is only done after the first three questions have been addressed. It also means that programming will be flexible and adapted to many settings. For example, the following program ideas might be developed from the three goals set above.

- a. One social activity will be planned every other week with an emphasis on variety and participation.
- b. A unit of six lessons will be conducted on making moral decisions. The emphasis will be on helping youth in the process of making their own decisions.
- c. Leaders will attempt to praise the accomplishments of each youth. This will involve observing each person and finding out what is happening to them outside the youth group.

It is quite evident that this program varies from the formal and traditional to the informal and relational.

There are many resources available to

help us in our programming. Two such resources are *Ideas* by Youth Specialties and *Youth Ministries Resource*. The former is a gold mine of hundreds of effective ideas. The latter is produced by the Brethren in Christ and churches like us and is therefore particularly relevant for our youth. We should use these resources in ways that will truly meet the needs of our youth. Let's look at how this could be done.

When I assumed the leadership of a youth group, I needed to decide where to start because I did not yet know the kids. Reading the local paper, I noticed interviews with the candidates for homecoming queen. Each candidate was asked, "What is the most difficult problem young people face?" All the candidates except one mentioned peer pressure. Although I had not identified it as an issue with my young people, it seemed like a good place to start. In looking through my resources, I found an excellent unit on peer pressure in *Youth Ministries Resource*. I decided to use this unit on Sunday evenings.

5. *How successful was the program?*

Answering the first four questions may improve the quality of our youth ministry, but to continue that improvement, evaluation is a must. We must know our strengths to capitalize on them and our weaknesses to make needed changes.

Information for evaluation can come from a variety of sources. Our own subjective ideas are helpful, but we are blind to many aspects of the ministry. Young people active in the program are perhaps the best source. Informal discussion of the effectiveness of various programs and more formal, anonymous questionnaires are useful. Beware that teenagers often tell us what they think we, or other youth, want to hear about the program. That makes confidentiality essential. Other youth leaders and youth specialists who observe our ministry can give feedback. An often overlooked source of information is the youth in the church who are not active in the program. Their honest answers as to why they are not involved are valuable.

To this point, we have posed several questions that should be asked if we want to tailor our program to the needs of the youth rather than provide canned programs that may be irrelevant. Yet, are there not times when fast food is the most efficient and perhaps even the most effective method? In at least two situations, the youth minister may be forced to become "Ronald McDonald."

**Here are some
helps for
developing an
effective ministry
to youth.**

First, when a youth minister is new to a congregation, he or she will not know the needs of the youth. It is probably wise to begin with prepared programs that are guaranteed to spark the interest of everyone. Meanwhile, the minister should develop avenues for learning to know the specific needs of the persons in the group.

Second, when the age span and interests of the youth are extremely diverse, the minister may have to aim at the average young person, at least in the

regular formal meetings. For example, one youth group I served was composed of two seventh grade boys, an eleventh grade girl and a senior boy. Yet, even in such a setting, it is important to minister individually to the needs of each one.

One final note: to offer a balanced diet to meet the needs of the youth, we must be able to focus on smaller groups. For those of us who are ministering in small churches, that should be a source of encouragement. It is easier for us to identify and meet individual needs. For

those of us in larger youth groups, we should consider breaking the group into smaller units for ministry. These units can be facilitated by adults with a commitment to youth.

But whatever the size of the group, we need to provide a ministry with a diet that meets the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social needs of our youth. McDonalds may be a fine place to take the youth after the Saturday night social, but its menu is not a good model for ministry. ■

Adolescence is a time when several important changes take place in the individual. Youths are no longer like children in the way they look, think, or act. Any youth program that fails to take these changes into account is doomed to failure. Let us look at some of these changes.

Identity. The young person is changing in his attitude toward himself. One of the most important tasks of youth is to "find oneself." The youth must analyze his talents, needs, opportunities, and ideals and come to an acceptable idea of who he is. During this time, other persons, both youths and adults, are extremely important because they reflect for the youth, how others see him. It is particularly important for Christian youths to find other Christians with whom to interact. In a group of Christians, he can be brought to understand that part of his identity is that he is a follower of Christ.

Physical. A youth experiences extreme physical growth and development. These physical changes often bring frustrating and puzzling consequences. The youth begins to wonder why his body is changing as it is, or why it is not developing as rapidly as others his age. Confronted with physical changes, the youth needs to know that his body is part of God's creation and even that he was created in the image of God.

Intellectual. At the beginning of the teen years, the youth undergoes a considerable change in his manner of reasoning. As never before, he has the ability to think abstractly, to examine statements for consistency, to speculate about things he has never seen, to do self-evaluation and self-criticism, and so forth. There is considerable evidence that intelligence reaches its peak during the years between 16 and 21. Therefore, those who work with youths must plan experiences that are more intellectually challeng-

ing than those planned for children. Youths should be challenged to think, test ideas, evaluate, and criticize. In doing so, the young person reaches conclusions about God and the world that are his own.

Moral. Youth have matured to the point that they are capable of making ethical decisions on the basis of personal principles instead of external concerns. Yet, the sad truth is that most persons, youths and adults, continue to base their moral decisions on what others will think or what society prescribes. Yet, if an individual ever develops a personal morality, he will do it during youth. Activities planned for youth should include discussions of moral situations and problems with a view toward helping the young person formulate his own ethical principles.

Sexual. During youth, the individual becomes sexually mature. This development brings with it many conflicts. The young person is encouraged to associate with the opposite sex, but sexual relations are forbidden. Permissive attitudes toward sex are common, but young people who are active sexually experience considerable guilt and disapproval. Activities planned for youth should enable them to understand the implications of sexual development and how a Christian is to cope with these new-found drives.

Family. A major change in adolescence is to break with one's parental family and to establish a family of one's own. Much conflict is associated with this break with parents. Youth should be helped to deal with his feelings about his parents and to formulate ideas concerning the type of family he wants to establish in the future.

Peers. As the youth severs relationships with parents, he establishes relationships with those his own age. Initially, these relationships are shallow and self-serving. Moreover, they tend to be established with persons like himself. The youth should learn to build relationships based on concern for other people and to form relationships with persons different from himself. Thus, he learns the nature of Christian love.

Vocation. Young persons become preoccupied with the task of constructing his own future. One of the biggest decisions to be made relates to vocations. This decision is of extreme importance because one of the main values of the Christian faith is that it gives meaning to life. As the young person plans his future, he needs to develop a belief system that gives meaning to these plans. Then, he can achieve a deep sense that his chosen vocation is God's will for him.

Excerpted from "The Changes of Youth" by John Yeatts, published in the July 10, 1978, Evangelical Visitor.



The Changes of Youth

Summer Service '83

This past summer, nineteen Brethren in Christ young people participated in the Summer Service program sponsored annually by the Board of Christian Education. They travelled from all over North America to work at our church institutions. They washed dishes, prepared food, did yard work, played with campers, and did a host of other necessary tasks. All were asked to evaluate their experience with Summer Service. Excerpts from some of those evaluations follow.

Winnie Brubaker, Quebec City:

I feel that my week of Summer Service was different from what most people experience. There weren't a lot of jobs to do, but I did what I could. This was also a week of growing for me. Just being around Dave and Patti Miller was an encouragement. We read from the Bible in French and prayed together. I watched them as they related to their neighbors and learned what is involved in planting a church (or even being a missionary). I will remember this as a week of growing in and strengthening my faith.



Karen Crawford, Kenbrook Bible Camp:

Summer Service at Kenbrook was a great experience for me this summer. I participate in many outreach areas in our local church and community, but now I have been able to go to another Brethren in Christ "mission" and see that they are doing much the same as we have been doing to reach children and lead them to Christ. It was very rewarding to see so many small lives given to Jesus because we gave our time and showed Christ's love to these children.



Tery Rhoades, Upland Manor:

My Summer Service experience was really rewarding. I felt important and involved around the Manor. The work I did was needed and appreciated. I became really close to the other personnel and the managers. I also became close to the residents. I learned how to do a lot of things well that I never knew how to do before. As last year, I felt I did something for the Lord.

Kathy Besecker, Spring Lake Retreat:

My two weeks in New York were two of the best weeks of my life. Spiritually I didn't grow a whole lot, but one day we went into New York City as part of our orientation. We had the chance to see how the city people live. It made me realize how privileged I am to be able to live in the country. We take many things for granted, such as cows, grass, farms, etc.

Both weeks I was there, kids from the city were also there. It was great to see those kids singing songs and learning about God. In fact, last year one kid went home singing new songs and soon his friends were singing them too.



Avis Brubaker, Spring Lake Retreat:

I really enjoyed my Summer Service experience at Spring Lake. It gave me a chance to see how people from the "big city" live and relate to life. As a result of going to Summer Service this year, the Lord brought me to the place in my life where he said, "Are you willing to give me all of your life or just half?" I praise the Lord that I can say that all of my life is the Lord's.



Mark Baker, Upland Manor:

In the two weeks I stayed in Upland I learned several things. I learned how to live by myself and make my own decisions. I learned how to have lots of understanding for older people and to adjust to their way of life. I also learned that the Lord can use anybody for Summer Service. It doesn't matter if you are crazy or smart; the Lord can still use you.

Serving in Summer Service 1983

Kenbrook Bible Camp

Sandy Brubaker, Jemison Valley (PA)
Karen Crawford, New Guilford (PA)
Lori Engle, Upland (CA)
Dawn Noyes, New Guilford (PA)

Quebec City

Winnie Brubaker, Fairview (OH)

Upland Manor

Mark Baker, Pleasant Hill (OH)
Tery Rhoades, Pleasant Hill (OH)

Camp Lakeview

Christina Fickes, Air Hill (PA)
Cindy Musser, Air Hill (PA)

Messiah Village

Beth Marx, Carland-Zion (MI)

Mile High Pines

Michelle Keller, New Guilford (PA)

Spring Lake Retreat

Kathy Besecker, Five Forks (PA)
Tammy Besecker, Five Forks (PA)
Terry Besecker, Five Forks (PA)
Avis Brubaker, Fairview (OH)
Terry Egolf, Five Forks (PA)
Lori Gsell, Mt. Rock (PA)
Tondra Thrush, Mt. Rock (PA)
Terra Lynn Hoch, Antrim (PA)

1984 . . .

Are you already looking forward to Summer 1984? Doing volunteer work through the Summer Service program is one way to obtain job-related experience and to do something worthwhile for others. If you're between the ages of 15 and 22, now is the time to begin thinking about participating in Summer Service next year. Contact Gladys Gorman, Director of Summer Service, Box 65, Quincy, PA 17247 for more information.

The Denominational Mission: Competition or Contribution?

by Grace Holland

Why should we as a church maintain our own separate missions operation? Would there not be value in joining our strength to that of larger interdenominational organizations? These questions need to be asked. To answer them, we must first discuss why denominations exist.

Denominations sometimes see themselves as divisions for combat or competition. Some seem to persist mainly as means for groups of people to maintain their identities. Such motives can be detrimental; yet as we think of our age of conformity and God's apparent pleasure in diversity, wiping out all distinctions may not be a worthy aim for the church. Denominations allow people with similar ideas to work together. And they permit different emphases which can contribute to the good of the universal church in somewhat the same way that individuals contribute to the body of Christ.

Smaller denominational missions provide some good ways of getting at the job of evangelizing the world. The percentage of their management overhead often compares favorably with that of larger, more professional organizations. They sometimes do a better job of concentrating on a few fields because their attention is not divided throughout many fields. The sending churches of the denomination provide bases of relationships and models of church life for the new national churches, though these will make their own cultural adaptations. The Lord really needs hundreds of working groups to get the job of missions done.

A denomination needs an outlet for its spiritual energies. Missions provide this outlet. Supporting mission outreach should not be considered a private, optional action for individual Christians. Rather, it should be an exciting corporate privilege for the congregation and the denomination. The mission board, then, needs to be accountable to the church, with the church providing direction in determining God's will for itself as a whole.

A denominational mission can provide the necessary link between local congregations, missionaries, national churches, and unmet world needs. It can help the local church strengthen and broaden its mission vision.

The denomination can also profit greatly from its work in missions. The testimonies from overseas Christians will encourage the brotherhood. The spiritual vitality of missionaries who work at the fringes of the church will challenge the denomination. The fellowship and teaching of leaders of ethnic churches who visit the sending church who visit the sending church will enlarge her vision.

Wrestling with issues raised by the mission program will help the church keep its balance doctrinally. In *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, Carlton Wittlinger states of the Brethren in Christ, "The impact of the mission movement required them to consider how to balance the historic concern for being the church with a new degree of concern for extending the church. Evangelism, formerly an individual effort, now became the responsibility of all, and the process by which it did so released a flood of spiritual vitality into the Brethren movement" (p. 192). Involvement with cross-cultural work will also help us wrestle with questions of basic principles and current applications in relation to God's word.

As a denominational mission, the Brethren in Christ also have some con-

tributions to make to the church universal. We are one organization among hundreds needed to spread the gospel. We are not in competition with others who preach the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. At the same time, we have a contribution to make that is not quite like that of any other group. Dr. Arthur Glasser of Fuller Seminary hints in his classes that Anabaptists may have a good handle on missions because of their willingness to challenge "the powers." Dr. George Turner of Asbury Seminary is writing a book suggesting that the Brethren in Christ blend of theology may be closest to that of the New Testament church. Such comments give us a sense of responsibility.

Our theological biases allow us to address realistically both the cultural and spiritual mandates of God's Word. The blend of Anabaptist (deep commitment to scriptural obedience), Pietist (belief in a personal conversion experience), and Wesleyan (emphasis on the control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit) theology represents a somewhat unique combination. Having each of these emphases to keep the others in balance, the teaching of the church has powerful potential for producing wholesome Christians and churches in new areas.

The teachings on scriptural obedience help give the Bible its proper place in the minds of new converts. With an understanding of the differences in cultures, this should also help us encourage people of other ethnic groups apply the biblical emphasis on right living to the strengths and weaknesses of their cultures.

The emphasis on personal Christian experience and the ministry of the Holy Spirit should prepare us for power encounters with the spiritual forces active in the areas where we go. It should also give strength for the daily living of the Christian life and the sharing of that life in testimony and discipling of others.

The peace emphasis of the denomination is in keeping with the emphasis of the Bible—from the *shalom* (total well-being of God's people in proper relation to him) in the Old Testament to the *koinoia* (God's children in proper relation and fellowship with each other) in the New Testament. As guests in other countries, Brethren in Christ missionaries refrain from involvement in political conflicts, believing that it is impossible to preach the gospel and try to control the political system at the same time.

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The Lord really needs hundreds of working groups to get the job of missions done.



J. Clair Shenk

The Reproducing Church

As I read and reread the bishop's report for the Atlantic Conference and noted the statistics for added members, I could not help but detect a note of great concern coming through to us. I find myself asking what we can do in order to be more productive in winning souls, feeding the flock of God, and retaining our members. We need to reevaluate our vision and motivation for church growth.

In Romans 1:16 the apostle Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Paul's compassion is noted so visibly when he says in verse 11, "I long to see you." There is very little room for doubt that the apostle felt a sense of obligation when he says in verse 14, "I am debtor." His attitude shows a spirit of preparedness when in verse 15 he says, "I am ready to preach the gospel." There are, of course, other things to preach than the gospel of Christ. But no other subject will move people more.

For a church to be a reproducing church, there must be coming from us the type of commitment that Paul felt: compassion (longing to see souls saved), obligation ("We are debtors"), preparedness ("I am ready"), and no apologies ("I am not ashamed").

When we grasp the impact of the power of this gospel of Christ—his miraculous conception, his life, death, resurrection and ascension—and exalt and lift him up, the results will be dynamic. It will release the power of God in our midst and draw others to him. Proverbs 29:18 warns that, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Let

me illustrate this portion of Scripture from the life of a member of my church. Chet Paulus is a Sarasota city fireman and rides the rescue vehicle as an Emergency Medical Technician. Whenever they receive an emergency call, everything stops and all attention is directed to responding to the location from which the call comes. Their job is to rescue from the burning building anyone who may be caught in the flames. Should they fail for one reason or another to save the lives of the trapped individuals, the news media would state that so many people perished in that fire, that firemen were unable to reach victims, etc.

Everywhere we go, whether at work or at play, there are men, women, boys, and girls who do not know our Jesus. If they are not saved, they are dead in their sins, and are perishing, heading for judgement. We owe it to them to present Jesus to them, as we know him to be. Let me quote from Dr. William Evans, "The church, the members of which are not engaged in evangelism and witness, has forfeited its right to exist."

When Jesus selected his disciples in Mark 1:17, we hear him saying to those rough men, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." As we follow this band of 12 men, we see that they really did become fishermen as they followed Jesus. After they were sent out and returned, they were amazed to realize that even the devils were subject to them. Even though those great things were happening, they had not begun to see the potential they would eventually have when they received the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, if we are going to change the statistical picture, we will need to launch out into the deep and expect a bigger catch: people with backgrounds different than our own, people with new names and new blood. Note that Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men," not, "I will make you keepers of aquariums or gatherers of beached

fish." We dare not spend our time fishing in one another's ponds. It seems to me that the church of Jesus Christ is encountering a spiritual conflict that is very real and evident. We must handle this conflict with authority and power over the working of the enemy, Satan, whether it is within or outside of the fellowship. We dare not be satisfied with the status quo, nor entertain such statements as, "We would rather be a small group and remain spiritual." I believe that it is impossible to be spiritual and not grow.

There are people all around us whose lives are in shambles because of divorce, alcohol, drugs, etc. Not one of these people can be avoided so as to make it possible to say with an air of religious pride, "We have none of that in our church." Jesus Christ is a specialist in straightening out lives that have been wrecked by sin.

What means can we use to motivate ourselves and our people? First, the pastor and church leaders must be excited; they dare not quit or look for an escape. Spirit-directed enthusiasm is contagious. Second, our motivation is a result of being filled with the Spirit.

Let us briefly look at the transformation of the disciples after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Note the man Peter while following Jesus from afar. He denied his Lord, cursed and swore while trying to convince his accusers that he was not one of Jesus' disciples. He did all this to save his neck. How could this denial come after spending three years following the greatest teacher that ever lived? He was not filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, we see this same Peter take charge of the situation. Peter, being acquainted with the book of Joel, was immediately alerted by the Holy Spirit and responded by saying, "These are not drunken, as

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J. Clair Shenk is pastor of the Community Bible Chapel (BIC), Sarasota, Florida. This article has been adapted from Rev. Shenk's key note address to the Atlantic Regional Conference, March of 1983. Scriptural quotations from King James version.

you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:15-17). Before Peter sat down, many souls were touched by the Holy Spirit and 3,000 were added to the church that day. Later, the crowds, realizing that these men were ignorant and unlearned, took note that they had been with Jesus. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the end result will always be testifying of Jesus and glorifying him as we are led by and walk in the Spirit.

Let me draw a comparison between Christians and sheep, a comparison which the Bible often makes. If I were a shepherd with a flock of sheep that was not producing a good grade of wool or healthy young lambs each year, the first thing I would do is call the veterinarian to check the flock carefully. If the vet's examination revealed that there was a disease among the flock, I, as a good shepherd, would tell him to treat the diseased sheep and make them well, so I could stay in business.

So it is with the church. When I, as the pastor of the Community Bible Chapel, find some sheep that are despairing, disappointed, and discouraged, I endeavor to lead them into the experience of sanctification and the Spirit-filled life. This makes them well and healthy. These people then become the most effective, enthusiastic promoters of Jesus Christ as he is presented at the Community Bible Chapel. Healthy sheep bear more sheep.

I believe that when we see the church, not as our field, but as a force, we will be delivered from the practice which seems to be prevalent: programs, gimmicks, and promotion to entice people to come to our churches and then join our fellowship. I would like to propose that we make our gatherings for Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and mid-week services times of praise, thanksgiving, worship, healing, prayer, and saturation of the Word. Then when we leave these services, we will be reassured of our rest in the Lord. We will be restored and healthy Christians who will move out as a force starting fires of hope in all those with whom we come in contact—in the shop, the store, the office, and the home—as doctors, nurses, laborers, and teammates. Then people will take note that we have been with Jesus. ■

The Denominational Mission: Competition or Contribution? *from page 13*

The peace emphasis is especially applicable in today's world of competition and conflict, as people groups come more and more in contact with each other. This leads to the teaching of brotherhood.

With the word "brethren" in our name, we aim at genuine oneness among ourselves and with new parts of the church around the world. The concepts of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all Christians with Christ come through clearly in the Scriptures (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11-18; Rom. 8:17). We believe that true brotherhood with one another is possible *only* in Christ. As we refine and pass on our concept of brotherhood, our own experience and understanding will be enlarged and that brotherhood will lead to increasing partnership in the gospel with our overseas brothers and sisters.

We believe that denominational missions can make a much needed contribution to the growth of God's kingdom

throughout the world. This is not to say that denominational missions are always better than interdenominational ones, or that we should never cooperate with these other organizations. What it does say is that we as the Brethren in Christ are responsible to play a part in the discipling of the nations, and that we have a good set-up to do it. As members of this church then, we need to be informed about the state of cross-cultural evangelism in our world, to be aware of the particular opportunities afforded our denomination, and evaluate the effectiveness of our program. May God help us to do it. ■

This article has been adapted from two segments of a more extensive missiological statement prepared by Grace Holland for the Brethren in Christ Board for Missions. Grace has received her Masters in Missiology from Fuller School of World Missions. She and her husband Fred are serving as church-planting resource persons to the churches of Zimbabwe and Zambia.

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STARTING from SCRATCH

An interview with three church planters—
Ralph Wenger, Orvin White, and Warren
Hoffman.

Interview by Phil Byers

This article is a compilation of excerpts from three separate interviews with Ralph Wenger, pastor of the Alta Loma Church (California), Orvin White, pastor of the Blue Ridge Church (Virginia), and Warren Hoffman, pastor of the Oklahoma City Church (Oklahoma).

Church planting could be defined as establishing new worshiping bodies of believers with their own identities as ministering congregations. Church planting can take place anywhere, among unevangelized tribes overseas or within a few miles of an existing church. The purpose of church planting is to evangelize and minister to people who are not being reached by existing churches.

Ralph Wenger, Orvin White and Warren Hoffman are three of several church planters serving the Brethren in Christ Church in North America. In this interview, they explain what church planting involves and share the frustrations and excitement of their work. Use this information to learn how to pray for our church planters.

Phil: *What does a church planter have to start with? What resources, if any, did you have?*

Ralph: We had a few Christian families to work with at Alta Loma.

Orvin: We didn't have any resources. It was just my wife and I. The meeting place was in our home.

Warren: We relied heavily on the prayer, encouragement, counsel, and financial support of the larger church, of the Midwest Conference and of the Bethany congregation—the one closest to us. In Oklahoma City, a handful of families were supportive of our work.

Phil: *What did you set as your first goals when this outreach began?*

Warren: Our initial goal was to bring together a team of persons who would work with us to build the new congregation. God provided these people in unexpected ways. Now we in the team together have the faith to pray and work next for a church site, an active evangelistic outreach, increasing attendance, and an expanding nucleus of persons actively working for the development of our congregation.

Ralph: Our first goal was to make contact with as many unchurched people as possible. We also set a goal to begin building the core group into a leadership team.



When I am walking
in the belief that
God has called me,
then I can trust him to
anoint me for the task.
—Ralph Wenger

Orvin: We had to let the people of our community know that we were in the area. Next we started seeking a place to meet. And then you've got to have personnel.

Phil: *How did you let people know about the church?*

Ralph: We did this through a telephone campaign and follow-up visits. Over 1,000 calls were made. The response was that about 150 people showed interest.

Orvin: At Blue Ridge, we sent out a letter of introduction, went door-to-door, and made a telephone survey.

Warren: In the beginning we looked for persons in Oklahoma City with a Brethren in Christ background and cultivated their involvement. These persons led us to some others. We also watched for providential encounters. Later, we began using a simple neighborhood survey to find unchurched persons. Most recently, we have subscribed to a newcomers listing, and are contacting persons who are new in the area. All of these initiatives have brought persons into the congregation and now these people, as they become enthusiastic, are bringing family and friends with them.

Phil: *What types of barriers did you meet as your work began?*

Orvin: The first barrier I found was that the Brethren in Christ Church is virtually unknown. The people don't know where to put us. They want to know if we're a splitoff of the Church of the Brethren. You have to take time to go into a little bit of detail explaining where we originated and what our theology is. Most of the people in the community have a Calvinist background. For some, something different from what they've been accustomed to or

Phil Byers is a staff member for Brethren in Christ Missions, Mount Joy, PA.



When people find out our church is 200 years old and has not split off from another group, it makes them feel comfortable. Some are fed up with church splits.
—Orvin White

grew up in is attractive. When they find out that we are 200 years old and have never split from another group, it makes them feel comfortable. Some of these people are fed up with churches splitting up.

Another barrier is our meeting place. The idea of meeting in a house turns some people off. They're really particular about what kind of building it's going to be.

Ralph: Many of the people we contacted were looking for a church, but they wanted a "full service" church, as contrasted to a new congregation just starting out, without a Sunday school, youth ministry or the stability of a church building. These barriers were not easily overcome. For many, we did not overcome. But we did win in many other cases by trying to help them see that the church is not a building, it is God's church; the real need for youth is not necessarily a great youth program, but adults and parents modeling what it means to live for Jesus Christ. This offers the most lasting and important incentive for youth to follow Christ. Our many Bible studies did serve to meet needs for many of these people.

Warren: One initial barrier at Oklahoma City was the precariousness of our existence. People perceived accurately that we might not make it. However,

when one couple took early retirement and began working unstintingly for our congregation, their manifest maturity and wisdom dissipated qualms about our credibility.

We too found our lack of name identity as Brethren in Christ to be a barrier. We are finding, though, that when people get close enough to experience the reality of Christ in our midst, they are generally attracted and excited.

Phil: *Each of you have spoken of the need for leadership or a core group. How was this developed?*

Ralph: Building a leadership team is best done by modeling, teaching and praying. It requires a great deal of time given to those being discipled.

Orvin: Most of the people in our church are either new Christians or have never functioned in a leadership role. But if a person is willing, I give him a responsibility and then tutor him. New converts will surprise you because they're interested in serving the church, so they make a genuine effort. They may not be as polished as some, but their enthusiasm offsets their experience.

Warren: When we began, we went first to persons here in the city with a Brethren in Christ background to look for partners in a church planting team. After mixed responses from them, we appealed directly to the Lord to raise up laborers for his Oklahoma City harvest. He has answered in unexpected ways and we are rejoicing now in a committed, enthusiastic and hard-working church planting team with varied and complementary gifts.

Phil: *How long did it take for your groups to develop into worshipping bodies?*

Ralph: We began in July with one Bible study group. In September we began Sunday services.

Orvin: About six months. We started with a Wednesday night Bible study in our house. When we began an organized worship service, we had about 30 people.

Warren: Within four months, Bible study groups were meeting. We did not develop an identity of our own as a worshipping body, however, until we began Sunday morning worship services a year and a half later.

Phil: *Where did your groups first meet?*

Ralph: Our first meeting place was the community elementary school cafeteria.

Orvin: We met first in our home and then began renting the vacant house where we now hold services.

Warren: We held the first Bible studies in our home.

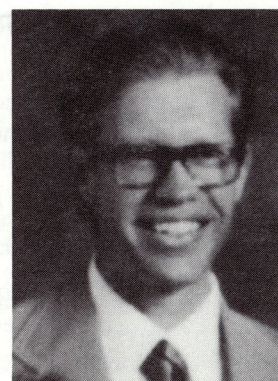
Phil: *Would you share with us some of the frustrations you encountered in your church planting effort?*

Orvin: Some of my most frustrating times are when I feel like I have to do everything. I don't have any one to help me. I am the custodian, Sunday school teacher, song leader and preacher. For two hours I'm up front and that's not good. It looks like a one man show and I don't like that. I don't have anyone else to accept responsibility. You have to tutor everyone so that you could almost do things easier yourself.

Another thing is our need for fellowship. A lot of times my wife and I feel lonely, yet we have no one to talk to or share our concerns and frustrations with.

Warren: Early in this ministry, we too had the frustration of feeling so alone without any close support here in Oklahoma City. The worst times are when our emotional and spiritual stamina is depleted, and we lose our grip on faith. A recurring frustration is simply not knowing what to do. But that drives us to our knees, and keeps us praying.

next page, please



We learned—the hard way—to build on the proper foundation, and now we are experiencing gratifying response.
—Warren Hoffman

STARTING from SCRATCH

from page 17

Ralph: Frustration for me was mostly centered upon unchurched people looking for the "great" church rather than the local church.

Phil: Now tell us about one or two of your most exciting moments.

Ralph: I was excited to see the church develop into a body which was soon taking responsibility for leadership, for ministry and for the financial needs.

Orvin: It is exciting anytime that anyone accepts the Lord. And it's exciting when I see guys that were alcoholics really pray through or families with marital problems become reunited and start attending church. These things are the most exciting things for me because I feel like the church is having an impact on people's lives.

Warren: It was—and still is—exciting when persons, after a time of considera-

tion, communicate their readiness to work actively with us. It was exciting to baptize eight persons and receive ten into church membership one Sunday. Somehow the pool at the YWCA became a sacred place for that half hour. It is exciting to watch persons new to evangelistic outreach make their first initiatives to reach neighbors and friends for Christ.

Phil: What have you learned about your relationship with God through this experience?

Ralph: God is still teaching me that he is Lord of the Church and that God's plan for growth cannot always be captured in my schematic of things. I have learned to be patient. When I am walking in the belief that God has called me, then I can trust him to anoint me for the task. I have learned the patience of awaiting God's timing and his way of working to form and grow congregations.

I believe that two things are very important concerning the pastor: One, he must know that God has called him and that he is secure in the Lord, relative to feelings about himself, his family, and

his task. Two, he needs to focus on living and teaching the biblical principles of truth in a ministry of love rather, than thinking that mere positiveness or special programs can accomplish the task.

Orvin: God taught me that nothing was going to happen outside of his consent. You've got to be totally dependent on God. Without God you're going to come to a dead-end.

Warren: We came full of enthusiasm for innovative styles of church life and tried to promote the new church on that basis. No takers. Next, we proclaimed the strengths of the Brethren in Christ. Small response. Then one night we were visiting a young couple who said, "Tell us what you believe," and we responded with the basic salvation message. As we walked to the car afterward, I Corinthians 3:11 came to mind: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." We learned—the hard way—to build on the proper foundation and now we are experiencing gratifying response.

We have also learned that church planting is a real battle. For the first time Paul's charge to equip ourselves as Christian soldiers took on real urgency.

Phil: How can the brotherhood best be of support to our church planters?

Orvin: Church planters really need the help of other people to establish a church. They need teachers and musicians. I would like to have them come and settle in the area and become permanent residents of that area. However, I would accept somebody on a short-term basis if that was the best I could do.

My prayer request is for the church leadership. Pray that they are always in a position where the Holy Spirit can direct their lives. Pray also that people would come that would be genuinely serious about being a part of the church planting and are committed to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

Warren: Keep giving generously. Encourage us in the early days—and years! Wait patiently for our labors to "jell" into a real, live congregation. Refuse to blame or second-guess church planters who have moved on to another assignment; this gives the rest of us the courage to risk "failure" for the sake of Christ.

Above all, pray—especially the prayer that Jesus suggested, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:38). Be sure to remind him that many are needed in Oklahoma City! ■

FUND UPDATE

The New Hymnal Project:

HYMNS FOR PRAISE AND WORSHIP

- Half of the need funds have been received.
- The selection and editing process is nearly completed.
- The balance of the funds are badly needed before we begin the printing and binding of the new hymnal.

Total required:	\$100,000
Funds received:	49,000
Funds needed:	\$ 51,000

- Help keep the hymnal project on schedule . . . planned release is at General Conference 1984.

Send your contribution to:

Evangel Press
P. O. Box 189
Nappanee, IN 46550

Gifts of \$200 or more will receive a special "Limited Edition" copy of the hymnal. Details are available from Evangel Press.

Nicaraguan Christians serve their communities

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—"Working in community development projects has helped our churches communicate that we believe Jesus is interested in the material well-being of people."

"People see the social development and know that our testimony isn't just a future hope." These statements by Nicaraguan Mennonites and Brethren in Christ illustrate their Christian commitment to community development.

For the past four years, since the Sandinista revolution overthrew the 50-year-old Somoza dynasty, the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite churches in Nicaragua have worked hard through community-based projects to reconstruct and develop their country. During a recent visit of Herman Bontrager, Mennonite Central Committee secretary for Latin America, representatives from these churches gathered to evaluate their experiences and discuss the future projects of their interconference Service Committee.

When MCC volunteers Henry and Lorena Doerksen arrived in Nicaragua in early 1980 to promote community service projects, they did not need to start from scratch. The churches founded by the Rosedale Mennonite Mission had known voluntary service workers before they met the first Rosedale missionaries. Similarly, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (Canada) and Brethren in Christ missions promoted health services along with their evangelistic work.

Without a lot of training, but with a strong desire to express God's love in their communities, the three conferences totaling 75 organized churches and just over 2,000 members have through their Service Committee constructed schools, clinics, latrines and wells. Sometimes the churches initiate the projects. On other occasions they join projects sponsored by a community organization, the government or CEPAD, a Nicaraguan inter-church development agency.

"The Sandinista government wants to do development and we want to do development," comments José Durán, Convención Menonita (Rosedale) leader and member of the Service Committee. "We can't do everything in our communities so we're not going to be so

egotistic and try to do it all. We look for ways to divide the work and cooperate."

Durán's community, Zonzapote, recently used MCC funds to replaster its elementary school's walls to prevent deterioration during the rainy season. The government provided new desks.

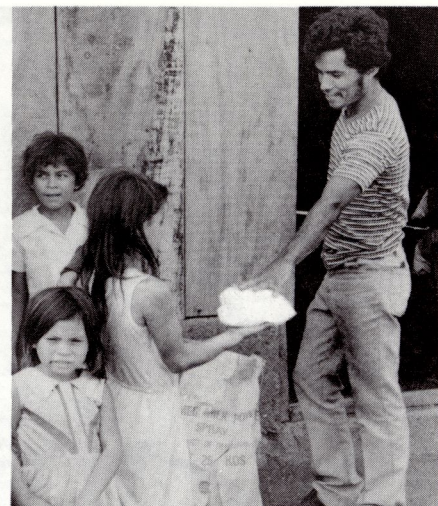
The seven small communities in the zone where Durán lives and works are typical of the many rural areas where Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches are located. Durán commented, "Because our communities are not accessible by truck it's hard for the government to work here." During the three-hour walk from the highway to his community, Durán points out latrines and wells that the government constructed. But as the road narrows into a rocky path such projects fade.

Durán walks and talks with a spirit of optimism. But he also knows that development is a slow process with setbacks along the way. The people of San Gerónimo worked hard to dig the holes and construct the cement bases of their latrines. But now the latrines remain largely unused because the community is waiting for zinc siding rather than using local materials to enclose them.

Most of the Service Committee projects occur in communities where churches are already established, but sometimes the request for help from a neighboring community starts a new work. When Feliciano Gonzales, member of the Fraternidad Menonita (EMC), heard of a small desperately poor community, he did not just report the need to a committee but moved to the community for several years.

Through the work that he initiated, residents of Colama now have latrines, have received loans to repair their homes, and have a health leader and clinic. To save money the clinic was built as an addition to the newly constructed Mennonite church and three-quarters of the MCC donation to build the clinic was in the form of a loan that will be repaid to the community for future projects.

During the days of Somoza, a government-paid teacher came to Colama only several days each month. Now nearly 150 children are enrolled in grades one to four and receive daily instruction from several Cuban teachers who are



Joetta Handrich Schlabach

Lolo, the Colama health promoter with the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Service Committee, distributes powdered milk to families who have undernourished children.

helping to fill the shortage of Nicaraguan teachers. (Grades five and six will be added in the next two years.) The old village school cannot accommodate all of the children. Until the new school is built, the Mennonite church serves as a classroom.

The Brethren in Christ church, largest of the three conferences, has the majority of its churches in rural areas. But it also ministers in several poor neighborhoods in Managua that increased in size after May 1982 floods destroyed many homes and brought many people to the city seeking a new life. Besides providing basic sanitary needs in these communities, several projects are also generating income for these poor. Newly purchased carpentry tools and sewing machines enable the communities to offer classes and the promise of a skill during a time of economic austerity.

The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches of Nicaragua recognize that they have learned many things while conducting these community projects. They are now eager to increase their ability to better identify community need, to plan and to work more effectively.

They also realize how important their witness has been. "Help from MCC has helped us maintain our position of peace," commented Durán. "It's easy to say we are pacifist. But what are we doing to help 'the process?' Our work says we are interested. Even the local government authorities recognize our work . . . they can't say we're not revolutionaries."—Joetta and Gerald Handrich Schlabach



IMPRESSIONS of JAPAN

by Paul
Hostetler

I like the way John Graybill, our senior missionary in Japan, communicates. He comes right out and states what he has in mind; he grins and shares it; he smiles and says it.

When I talked to John in Japan, he asked me what I planned to say to the people back home about the Japanese church. My reply was a bit too indefinite to suit his forthright way of facing things, so he asked me again.

Taking a deep breath, I told John that one thing I would *not* do was make suggestions on how the missionary work in Japan could be more successful. I have learned in other contexts that getting a job done properly seems much easier after observing it for a few days than it does after living with it for some years. "And so I will just be sharing

some of my impressions," I assured him. He seemed partly satisfied.

My wife Lela and I, along with Bob and Millie Hawes, who are members of the Niagara Falls congregation, took a four-week trip to Japan last summer to visit Dan and Karen (our daughter) Deyhle and our grandsons. Although it has been several months since we returned, it still seems best to simply share impressions.

● **Impression 1:** We may be using the wrong name. The Japanese call their nation of four large islands and many smaller ones Nippon, which means *source of the sun*. Isn't it interesting that when, in relatively recent times, the nations of the world put the International Date Line on the map, its location did indeed establish the home of the Nipponese as "The Land of the Rising Sun"?

And isn't it interesting that we English-speaking people insist on saying Japan

rather than Nippon, the name which this ancient nation has used for countless generations. As one travels in this Oriental setting and sees the name of the country on billboards and manufactured goods, "Nippon" is clearly the preferred designation.

I suspect that this kind of insensitivity makes it difficult for Western people to effectively relate to the Japanese (I will use the familiar term for your convenience). How would you and I feel if foreigners who are trying to introduce us to a new way of life always called our country by the wrong name?

● **Impression 2:** Japan is very crowded. Mountains cover six of every seven square miles, squeezing the population into the valleys and along the seashores. Cities are overcrowded and farmland is scarce. Every acre of arable land is cultivated into service. We saw farm homes where the "lawns" on three sides were green with rice.

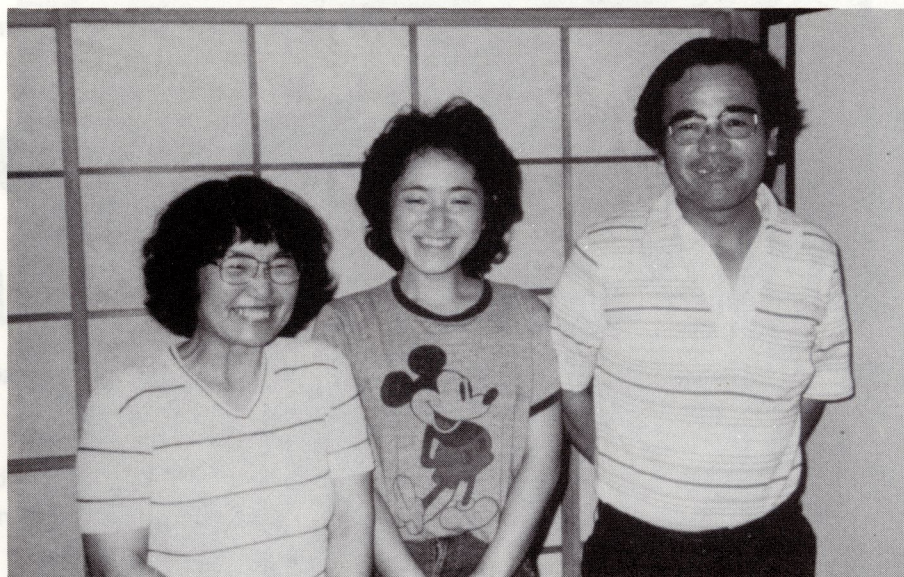
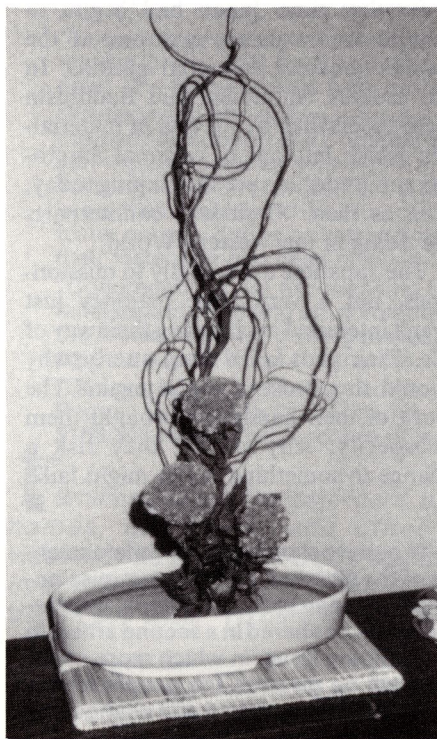
Paul and Lela Hostetler, both on the staff of Messiah College, have a slide presentation on their trip to Japan. For more information, write to Paul at Grantham, PA 17027.

● **Impression 3:** Japan is very beautiful. The mountains which occupy 85 percent of the islands help make the land of the Nipponese one of the world's most beautiful countries. As we traveled by car and train, the unfolding panorama of valleys, villages, lakes, and mountains was breathtaking, epitomized by majestic Mount Fuji, rising more than 12,000 feet above the nearby Pacific Ocean.

The fields of the farmlands are arranged in picture-book symmetry. Weeds cannot be tolerated because every square inch is needed. The two main crops we saw in the Tokyo and Nagoya areas were rice and tea. Rice is grown in flat areas because of the need for standing water in the fields during the growing season, while the tea fields climb up into the foothills. The tea is harvested by cutting off the exterior leaves from time to time and, typical of Japanese regard for beauty, each row is sculptured to look like the rounded hedge of the most fastidious gardener.

As alluded to earlier, lawns are very small. In our way of life, crowded city conditions breed squalor and ugliness, but most Japanese homes have verdant gardens. With such limited space, shrubs and trees are grown in miniature. There is often a focal point such as a bamboo fountain, a birdbath, or simply a rock.

Inside the Japanese homes, the beauty continues. A flower arrangement usually greeted us just inside the door. Perhaps more than any other people on



The Japanese are a very gracious, friendly people.

earth, the Japanese love flowers and greenery, and they have given many centuries of careful thought to simple, striking arrangements. Even the railroad stations never fail to have fresh flowers to brighten the day for the masses who hurry through.

● **Impression 4.** The Japanese work hard. Japan has little mineral wealth, as well as little farmland. To meet their needs, the Nipponese use their few natural resources prudently. But most important, it seems to me, are the skillful, hard-working people of Japan—their country's greatest resource.

We visited the Toyota factory in Nagoya one day. It was obvious that in spite of the fact that assembly line work is monotonous, the workers were putting in their time cheerfully and efficiently. Management in Japan has a fraternal attitude toward employees, and the workers respond with loyalty and high quality production. It would seem that unless Western workers (and management) can move toward this relationship, the Japanese will continue to have a very competitive edge on the world marketplace.

● **Impression 5:** The *gaijin* (foreigner) feels very foreign among the Nipponese. Until about 130 years ago, Japan was isolated from the rest of the world. This is evident in many ways.

As we moved about in the crowded

streets, stores, and stations, we felt very isolated. I was reminded of a typical American's remark after coming home from abroad: "I had a good trip, but everybody I met was a foreigner!" Children, and occasionally adults, stared, pointed fingers, and said "*gaijin*" to each other.

The people of Nippon have taken over many Western ideas, but they are still very Oriental. Their land is the land of the new and old, but mostly the old. It is a land of the West and East, but mostly the East. Graceful temples hundreds of years old stand near modern steel and concrete buildings. We saw an ancient pagoda alongside a high-rise apartment.

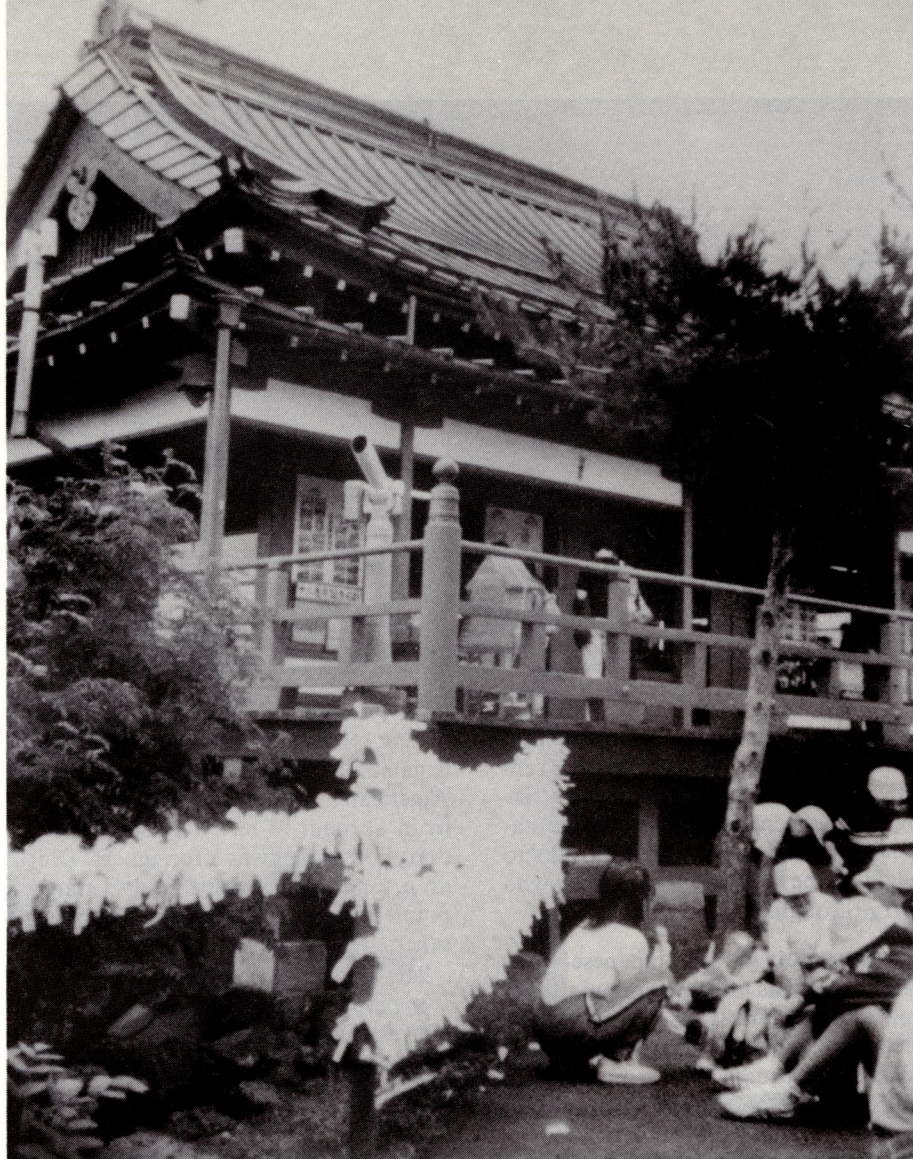
● **Impression 6:** The Japanese give their children much freedom. They love their offspring and choose to express their affection by seeming laxity in discipline. In spite of this the children, who are captivatingly beautiful, are courteous and show a proper respect for their elders.

Our grandsons in Japan are Vaughn, age seven, and Cameron, age five. They are well behaved most of the time, but when they are bad they are like the little girl "who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead." Sometimes, in good Western fashion, their parents need to give them a spanking.

Their mother was interviewed on a TV talk show on the topic of child discipline. We saw a videotape of the program. Among other things, Karen said that when they were first in Japan she one day spanked Cam (quickly and

The Japanese have had centuries of experience in creating attractive floral arrangements.

next page, please



Note the many slips of paper with prayers written on them in front of this Shinto shrine.

lightly) in a large store. She was distressed to notice that the Japanese who observed it seemed to be very displeased, and she therefore resolved not to lay hands on Cam in public again.

● **Impression 7:** Christianity is a minority religion in Japan. The original religion of Japan is Shinto—The Way of the Gods. Shintoism began in early times when the people worshiped the spirits of nature, and grew to include ancestor worship. About 78 million Japanese follow Shintoism, and Japan has more than 80,000 Shinto shrines.

Buddhism came to Japan from China about A.D. 550. More than 65 million Japanese embrace this religion, many of whom also practice Shintoism (we observed this in some home worship centers). The country has over 75,000 Buddhist temples. Buddha believed that all suffering is caused by desire, and that man must destroy his desires in order to find peace.

We visited Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines—large and small, old

and new, and from the very elaborate to the simple wayside ones. It was (and is) tempting to disregard these places and the religions they represent, but my impression is that missionaries (and the rest of us Christians) should be conversant enough with these beliefs to enter into thoughtful discussion about them.

Spanish and Portuguese missionaries first brought Christianity to Japan about 1550. In 1637 the government ordered all foreign influence wiped out, and Christianity was forbidden. Many thousands of Christians were killed, and the faith was all but stamped out. Religious freedom was restored in 1873. Today, Japan has approximately 1 million followers of Christ (nearly one percent of its population of 117 million) and about 3,000 churches.

● **Impression 8:** Japan feels friendly toward Western people. As the tide of World War II turned in favor of the Allies, the Japanese government and armed forces hung on desperately because they feared what the occupation

army would do to their women, their children, and themselves. When U.S. planes dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroying more than 300,000 people, their worst fears seemed to be confirmed. However, they had no choice but to surrender.

To their great surprise, when the conquering forces came marching into Japan under General Douglas MacArthur, he gave strict orders that the vanquished foe be given humane treatment. His orders were carried out, with few exceptions. The Nipponese were truly amazed. They have not forgotten to this day.

As many readers will remember, General MacArthur made a strong appeal for Christian missionaries to come to Japan. The time was opportune. The people were completely defeated—their cities in ruins, their industries smashed, and their faith shattered. The door was wide open to take the Good News to a disillusioned people looking for a better way of life.

Upon discussing the situation with some people in Japan, I learned that the missions agencies which moved in immediately had more success than those which came later, such as the Brethren in Christ, who first sent missionaries to Japan eight years later in 1953.

By that time Japan had begun to rebuild their country into one of the world's greatest industrial nations. In the process, Shintoism and Buddhism were superseded by the god of materialism which millions of nominal Shintoists and Buddhists are worshiping today, even as their "Christian" counterparts are doing in the Western World.

The Japanese are friendly to missionaries, but a very large majority just aren't interested in changing their way of life. Their gods failed them utterly; why should they trust in a god again? The work of their hands has brought them prosperity; why should they risk a change to something which might fail?

The above should give you brief sketches of the situation in which our missionaries in Japan work. Additional impressions will be shared in a second article in the January issue, in which more attention will be given to the people whose lives are being touched and changed by Brethren in Christ missionaries.

Evangelical Visitor

Brethren in Christ families have been

God's love reaching ...

to troubled youth where they are. Some have been

- victims of child abuse
- living on city streets
- rejected by parents
- left alone while parents are in prison
- victims of negative, unstructured, and insecure environments
- products of physical, emotional, and spiritual deprivation

These foster families have brought the love and care of a family; a positive environment, structure, and security; nurture for the total person; an understanding of God's love and encouragement to accept Christ; and discipleship ministries.

Through the Board of Benevolence, foster care ministries have been sponsored by the Messiah Children's Home Board of Trustees, now incorporated under a new name, MESSIAH FAMILY SERVICES. Promotion and services of foster care will continue to be a part of General Conference ministries through the Cooperative Ministries and Mission budget.

Following are excerpts from Brethren in Christ reports appearing in the 1983 newsletters edited by COBYS (Church of the Brethren Youth Services), through which placements are made, and case management and family therapy is provided:

"Reports of positive experiences with youth in Brethren in Christ homes continue to be received."

"One foster mother commented, 'Our children's lives truly are enriched as they learn the joy of giving love to someone hungry for it.' A probation and parole officer described a youth in one of these placements as really changing 'for the good.'"

"One couple recently had the opportunity to lead their foster daughter to the Lord, after she expressed her desire to receive Christ. This couple reports, 'Life for her is really changing. She's told people how happy and meaningful life is now.' The foster parents have further exclaimed, 'Oh how we praise the Lord and thank Him for her!'"

"Foster youth whose lives are changing, through coming into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and experiencing the love and support of a Christian family, are finding their way into the life and ministries of local congregations. A foster son recently went with his youth choir group to give a concert—at which time he also carried out a speaking part and volunteered to offer prayer for the group before the performance began. Another foster son enthusiastically participated in a skit on 'Daniel and the Lion's Den,' dramatized by a junior high Sunday school class for a Sunday evening service. A foster couple, during a sharing time in worship, expressed appreciation to the local congregation for the way in which their foster son had been made to feel a part of the church family."

"Congregations are experiencing the joy of supportive ministries, such as through being prayer partners with foster families and providing other volunteer services. In one congregation, a group of families have developed a schedule with the foster family for inviting the foster son to their homes for a Sunday dinner and the afternoon, thus giving the foster parents regular times to be alone with their family."

"Congregations are finding additional ways to become involved in foster care. During a 'Kid's Crusade' in July, at the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church, a 'jeans' project was sponsored. Children of the church and community brought in \$156.34 towards the purchase of jeans for youth in COBYS foster care."

* * * * *

Families engaged in foster care, by way of local agencies, throughout the brotherhood, are requested to send their names, addresses, and other pertinent information to the address below so that support services may be provided. Congregations are also encouraged to submit the name of a contact person so that special information and items of interest may be communicated in a more specific and personal way to the local congregation in any area. "To care for a child in the name of Christ is to build for eternity!"

Brethren in Christ Foster Care Ministries

Dr. Lucille Wingert, Director

R. 6, Box 174

Lancaster, PA 17603 (717) 872-5234





Don Shafer addresses the nearly 80 participants meeting together at Kenbrook.

Orientation, planning on the agenda for New Boards Workshop

Kenbrook Bible Camp was the site of an historic meeting October 15-17—an orientation workshop for the new general boards created in the “Renewal . . . 2000!” restructure process. Approximately 80 board members and resource persons shared in the weekend workshop, held at the Kenbrook Retreat Center.

Planners noted that this was the first time in the life of the denomination that all of the general boards had been brought together for a time of orientation and planning.

In a Saturday evening presentation, Owen Alderfer set the stage for the weekend orientation, noting that for boards and board members, “our tasks and gifts are many, but our mission is one.” The task confronting the Brethren in Christ Church, he said, is “to identify that which God has called us to be and to do,” to “define it,” and then decide “how to get on with it.”

The retreat alternated between plenary sessions and meetings of the indi-

vidual boards. Combined sessions dealt with such topics as preparing for board meetings, following up after board meetings, communication and decision-making, and management and stewardship models.

In the separate board sessions, persons had opportunity to share their vision for their board’s ministry. Officers were selected and details on executive staff persons were discussed. Several boards began preliminary work on picking up responsibilities for ongoing programs operated by current boards.

“These days have been the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream,” noted John Arthur Brubaker, member of the new Commission on Educational Institutions. “For some years I have looked forward to the day when members of general church boards and agencies would gather together to talk about the oneness of our mission; where they would talk *with* each other, not *at* each other.”

The naming of new boards and the

reassigning of board responsibilities are two facets of “Renewal . . . 2000!”, the restructure proposal which received first-reading approval at the 1982 General Conference. The Board of Administration Nominating Committee was authorized to name the new boards well in advance of the 1984 Conference, in order for them to organize and prepare to assume their new responsibilities. If the restructure plan is adopted in its second reading in July and appointments are confirmed, the new boards will begin to function immediately following Conference.

In the restructuring process, several boards were reduced in size. Also, a number of new persons were named to boards. Thus at the 1984 Conference, a number of persons will be completing their service on a board or commission. Several workshop participants noted with appreciation the years of dedicated service and leadership represented by these board members who will be retiring from office.

“Tonight I feel very much like I did in 1960, when I first came out of the hills of Virginia to attend a General Conference at Messiah College,” Dale Allison said during a sharing time Sunday evening. “I remember sensing the excitement and joy of the Brethren in Christ; I felt the love of the Brethren in Christ. During this weekend, and sensing the new boards emerging . . . , I’ve felt that excitement, joy, and love again. Let us not forget that Jesus taught that others would see how we love one another and then they will want to be a part of us.”

Arlene Miller captured the feelings



Part of the time was spent in “games” which promoted a sense of teamwork and fostered problem-solving techniques.



Lenora Stern (left) and Doug Sider give five minute reports on their board's vision for ministry.

many people expressed as she commented, "Broader vision, higher expectations, deeper respect, strengthened trust, greater love, firmer commitments—these words characterize my inner response to this weekend." But, she continued, "I heard concern being expressed for those persons in our congregations who aren't here with us. We are their servants. It is in them that the Holy Spirit will be doing the work of the Church."

Martha Lady spoke of some fears she experienced when asked to serve on the Board for Ministry and Doctrine. "But during this weekend," she noted, "I was reminded of Queen Esther, who worked in unfamiliar territory and at times had to go contrary to custom or tradition. Beginning to work with the board has given me a beginning sense of belonging and increasing challenge. It was a great weekend."

At the time of the orientation, a few board positions had not yet been filled. A full listing of boards as they will be recommended to General Conference for confirmation will appear in a later issue of the *Visitor*.

The six new program boards and the persons elected as chairpersons and secretaries are: Board for Brotherhood Concerns (Lenora Stern, chr.; Paul H. Wengert Jr, secy.), Board for Congregational Life (Frank Fimiano, chr.; Warren Hoffman, secy.), Board for Evangelism and Church Planting (Douglas Sider, chr.; Dale Allison, secy.), Board for Media Ministries (Dwight Bert, chr.; J. Wilmer Heisey, secy.), Board for Ministry and Doctrine (Luke Keefer Jr., chr.; James Ernst, secy.), Board for World Missions (Roger Sider, chr.; Linda Stern, secy.).

Frank Kipe chaired the planning committee for the weekend orientation, which was sponsored by the Board of Administration. Other planning committee members were Owen Alderfer, Pauline Allison, Merle Brubaker, Ken Letner, Don Shafer, and Roy Sider. ■

stewardship

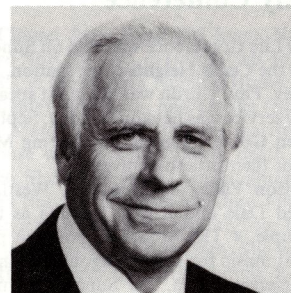
Giving to CM&M in 1984

Cooperative Ministries and Mission begins for the United States churches at the beginning of 1984. Much time and energy has gone into preparing for this improved approach for giving to our church ministries.

As a donor, we encourage you to give regularly in the offerings of your local church. A portion of the offering will go toward CM&M. Since you will not be bombarded with as many personal solicitations as in the past, we encourage you to increase your giving by way of your church offerings. If everyone does this, our ministries will be more than adequately supported.

At the same time, if you want to make a direct gift to a specific ministry, we encourage you to do it through your local church treasury. Your treasurer knows how to handle it and will speed the funds on their way to the designated group.

Cooperative Ministries and Mission—a *cooperative* approach for the *ministries* of our church to work together to fulfill the *mission* Christ has given us to do.



Eyster Named Field Representative

Dr. Ira M. Eyster, of Norman, Oklahoma, has been named a field representative for the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. The treasurer of the new Brethren in Christ Church in Oklahoma City, he will give primary attention to the Midwest Conference and assist the Pacific and Central Conferences as time allows.

A former president of the Jabbok Bible School, originally located at Thomas, Oklahoma, Dr. Eyster has held numerous posts in secondary and higher education, including assignments at the University of Oklahoma. He attended Jabbok, Upland College and holds degrees from Southwestern State University, Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma.

In church life, he has also held pastoral assignments and served on the Board for Christian Education and the Board for Schools and Colleges. A member of the Board of Trustees of Messiah College, he is also a member of the new Board for Media Ministries.

In making the announcement, Dr. David P. McBeth, U.S. Director of Stewardship and Finance, stated that "Dr. Eyster will concentrate his efforts in helping individuals and families do financial planning using Christian principles as guidelines. He will also help local churches in stewardship education and direct special financial fund drives as approved. Our church is fortunate to have someone of his caliber to contribute his time and resourcefulness to further its ministries."

The current Cooperative Ministries and Mission stewardship promotion chairman for the Midwest Conference, Dr. Eyster will also continue to assist Messiah College in estate financial planning programs in the Midwest Conference. He is available at 805 Willow Lane, Norman, Oklahoma 73069. His phone is (405) 321-1345.

church news

Atlantic Conference

The **Conoy** congregation, Elizabethtown, Pa., observed Ministerial Emphasis Sunday on Sept. 11. Two retired ministers from the congregation, Rev. Samuel Brubaker and Rev. Roy Zook, representing 77 years of ordination, shared personal insights and testimony.

A Christian education workshop was held by the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa., on Sunday afternoon, Sept. 18. • The **Harrisburg**, Pa., congregation is sponsoring a family of refugees from Ethiopia.

The **Lancaster**, Pa., congregation reports a total of 11 persons were baptized during the month of August. Nine were received into fellowship. • A special fellowship dinner was held by the **Souderton**, Pa., congregation on Sunday, Sept. 11 for Jeff and Libby Hollanbach, the youth advisors.

Allegheny Conference

A Family Life Conference was held on Sunday, Sept. 11, by the **Cedar Heights** congregation, Mill Hall, Pa. Rev. Paul Unruh was the guest speaker. • An all-day service was held on Sunday, Sept. 18, by the **Green Grove** congregation, Spring Mills, Pa., to honor their fiftieth anniversary.

The **Jemison Valley** congregation, Westfield, Pa., installed Dale and Rhoda Ciampa as their pastoral couple. • The Mountain Anthem presented special music for the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., on Sunday morning, Oct. 2.

On Sunday, Oct. 2, a Fall Festival of Praise was held by the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa. The Griener family from Bala Cynwyd, Pa., presented the entire morning service. A concert was held in the evening service featuring the Wingert family.

Bishop Alvin Book conducted the installation service of Jim and Jane Stauffer as the pastoral couple of the **Paramount** congregation, Hagerstown, Md. • A lecture and film on hospice care for the dying was presented to the Saxton, Pa., congregation by Dr. Earl Shope.

NOTICE TO NURSES

Just a reminder about our project to raise funds to help train midwives in Zimbabwe. Thus far, the funds have come in slowly. Thanks to all who have contributed to date. Our goal is \$7,000-\$8,000, with only seven months remaining to reach this goal.

Please send your project money and membership dues to:

Lucy Ensminger, Treasurer
691 Vallejo Way
Upland, CA 91786

(Note: This address was incorrectly printed in the October issue.)

Canadian Conference

On Saturday, Oct. 8, the **Bertie Church**, Stevensville, Ont., witnessed the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Bouavanh Vouphachanh. The congregation had sponsored the groom when he came to Canada in 1980 from Laos. The bride's brother-in-law presented a gospel message to the Laotians present at the wedding in their native tongue.

A grocery shower was held to welcome Rev. and Mrs. Jesse Bawel to the **Fordwich**, Ont., congregation. The couple was installed by Bishop Harvey Sider preceding a fellowship dinner on Sunday, Sept. 18. • Guests of the **Houghton** congregation, Langton, Ont., on Wednesday evening, Sept. 21, were David and Florence Carlson. They presented their work with Trans World Radio.

The **Wainfleet**, Ont., congregation held a special youth rally on Friday evening, Oct. 7. Rev. Angel Valentin was the guest speaker. • Rev. and Mrs. Phil Keefer, pastoral couple of the **Westheights** Church, Kitchener, Ont., hosted a fellowship meal on Sunday evening, Oct. 9, for the purpose of getting acquainted with Rev. and Mrs. Dave Illman. The Illmans have begun service as the associate pastoral couple of Westheights.

Central Conference

The **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, In., observed Missions Month on Sunday, Nov. 13, with Dr. John and Esther Spurrier and Mary Biser as guest speakers. David Carlson spoke on Sunday, Nov. 27. • Bishop Don Shafer led "Five Nights to Grow By" on Oct. 1-5 for the **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Oh. The series opened with a buffet dinner served on Saturday night.

Members of the **Northridge** congregation, Springfield, Oh., distributed flyers to the neighborhood to announce the showing of the film, "God's Prison Gang." • The **Sheboygan**, Wi., congregation used the Fourth of July parade as a means of advertising their VBS. The pastoral couple, Rev. and Mrs. Tyrus Cobb, rode in a car which pulled a float.

Revival services were held by the **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Oh., Nov. 6-11. The evangelist was Rev. Charles Norman. An informal get-together was held on Saturday evening prior to the beginning of the meetings to give the congregation opportunity to meet with Rev. and Mrs. Norman.

Midwest Conference

A special church for children was begun by the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Ok., on Sept. 25. The new program, using music and puppets, will be held the first Sunday of every month.

The Christ's Crusaders of the **Zion Church**, Abilene, Ks., sponsored an ice cream social and film recently. Donations were received for the youth ministries of the congregation.

Pacific Conference

The **Upland**, Ca., congregation hosted a regional Congregational Life and Family Life Seminar on

Nov. 4-6. Eber and Ruth Dourte and Joe Marks were the resource persons for the weekend, which centered around the theme "A More Excellent Way."

Three congregations have recently changed their names. They are: Immanuel changed to **Chino Hills Community**; Sunrise Fellowship to **Glendora Brethren in Christ**; and Lamb's Bride to **Tulare Brethren in Christ**.



A mortgage burning ceremony was held by the **Redwood Country Church** recently. The building was built in 1969-70. Taking part in the ceremony were (from left to right): Pastor Jim Ernst, Jenny Ernst, Walter Faszer, Amos Buckwalter, Kristy Ernst and Anna Mary Winger.

For The Record...

Births

Beiler: Jason Andrew, Oct. 3; Dale and Barbara Beiler, Refton congregation, Pa.

Buckwalter: Angela Jo, Sept. 27; Arlin and Ruth (Eberly Buckwalter, Mt. Pleasant congregation, Pa.

Bundenthal: Trisha Jean, Sept. 12; Don and Tammy Bundenthal, Highland congregation, Oh.

Claire: Ryan Duane, Sept. 30; F. Duane and Karen Claire, Martinsburg congregation, Pa.

Enders: Alyssa Joyce, Sept. 5; Joel and Lori Enders, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Gearhart: Abigail Constance, Aug. 17; Dennis and Dawn Gearhart, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Givens: Jessica Marie, Sept. 23; Rick and Joni Givens, Upland congregation, Ca.

Groff: Nathaniel Timothy, Sept. 4; Tim and Jill Groff, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Hall-Baker: Amy Lee, Sept. 27; Winfield and Tina Hall-Baker, Manor congregation, Pa.

Harner: Lindsay Jean, June 16; Jeff and Heather Harner, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Heath: Philip Lee, Aug. 5; Doyle and Sherry Heath, Saxton congregation, Pa.

Heisey: Laura Anne, Sept. 18; Keith and Susan (Engle) Heisey, Albuquerque, N.M.

Hess: Eric Eugene, Sept. 11; Lloyd and Barb Hess, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Hollenbach: Samuel Jeffery, Sept. 9; Jeff and Libby Hollenbach, Souderton congregation, Pa.

Kelley: Amber Dawn, Oct. 6; Mark and Cindy Kelley, Big Valley congregation, Pa.

Kindy: Aaron Mark, Sept. 14; Mark and Sherry Kindy, Bethel (Merrill) congregation, Mi.

Kipe: Michael David, Sept. 29; Dave and Janet Kipe, Manor congregation, Pa.

Kubassek: Candace Elizabeth, April 27; Dave and Nancy Kubassek, Rosebank congregation, Ont.

Lewis: Matthew Carl, Oct. 5; Carl and Gail Lewis, Mountain View congregation, Co.

Martin: Weston Vernon, Sept. 19; Doug and Marilyn Martin, Alta Loma congregation, Ca.

Miller: Elizabeth Laurel, Sept. 12; Tom and Jill Miller, Manor congregation, Pa.

Ressler: Benjamin Nicholas, Aug. 28; Dale and Bobbi Ressler, Conoy congregation, Pa.

Schaubel: Jason Matthew, Sept. 12; Dennis and Susan Schaubel, Bertie congregation, Ont.

Shaffer: Robert John, Oct. 3; Paul and Patty Shaffer, Upland congregation, Ca.

Stan: Terrielyn Jane, July 23; Howard and Julie (Eade) Stan, Fordwich congregation, Ont.

Taylor: Stephanie Ruth-Anne, July 26; Doug and Renate Taylor, Rosebank congregation, Ont.

Thompson: Reid Taylor, May 24; Rick and Laurie Thompson, Lancaster congregation, Pa.

Wolfe: Megan Kate, Sept. 15; Kim and Cathy Wolfe, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Bauman-Cober: Louise, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Cober, and Richard, son of Rev. and Mrs. Gordon Bauman, Aug. 28, in the bride's home with the father of the groom and Rev. John Zuck officiating.

Brown-Glant: Jackie Glant and Ricky Brown, both of Lebanon, Pa., May 7 in the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Earl Musser officiating.

Clark-Young: Lisa Young and Owen Clark, Sept. 16, in the Mt. Rock Brethren in Christ with Rev. John Schock officiating.

Ebersole-Jackman: Martha Jackman and Eric Ebersole, both of Lebanon, Pa., in St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, June 18 with Rev. Ralph Snyder officiating.

Ebersole-Stauffer: Gale Stauffer, Harrisburg, Pa., and Philip Ebersole, Lebanon, Pa., May 20, in the Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg, Pa., with Rev. David Fisher officiating.

Gemmell-McPike: Kathy Jo McPike, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Brandt, and Jud Gemmell, Sept. 10 in the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Hawbaker officiating.

Giles-Sider: Cheryl Ann, daughter of Bishop and Mrs. Harvey Sider, Fort Erie, Ont., and Stephen, son of Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Giles, Stevensville, Ont., Aug. 20, in the Riverside Chapel, with the fathers of the couple officiating.

Hamden-Gannon: Lucille Gannon, Kirkland Lake, Ont., and Todd, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sid Hamden, July 30.

Helfrick-Haag: Mary, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Haag, and Rodney, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Helfrick, Greencastle, Pa., Sept. 17, in

the Montgomery Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Lorne Lichty officiating.

Hunter-Miller: Paula Miller and John Hunter, Oct. 2, in the Cedar Heights Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John L. Bundy officiating.

Kanode-Bolyard: Susan Marie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Bolyard, and Karl Allen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Avery Kanode, Elizabethtown, Pa., Sept. 24, in the Palmyra Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Isaac S. Kanode and Rev. W. Dale Allison officiating.

Kaufman-Wysong: Sandy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wysong, New Paris, In., and Roger Kaufman, Nappanee, In., July 30 in the Nappanee Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gilbert Gomez officiating.

Keller-Darkes: Sharon Darkes, Jonestown, Pa., and Greg Keller, Cleona, Pa., in St. Elizabeth Congregational Church in Christ, Lickdale, Pa., June 18 with Rev. Clair Kocher officiating.

Meshy-Hess: Pam, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hess, Gap, Pa., and Rick, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Meshy, Lancaster, Pa., May 7 in the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Scott Miles officiating.

Neimeth-Martin: Deborah, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Martin, Gordonville, Pa., and Steven M. Neimeth, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Neimeth, Lancaster, Pa., April 16 in the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Merle Brubaker officiating.

Noel-Faber: Lynn, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Faber, and Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Noel, both of Abilene, Ks., Oct. 1, in the Zion Brethren in Christ Church with the father of the bride and Rev. Kenneth Engle officiating.

O'Donnell-Sleighter: Charleen Sleighter and Robie O'Donnell, Sept. 17, in the Mount Rock Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Schock officiating.

Renyo-Kuhn: Kim Kuhn, Annville, Pa., and Clifford Renyo, Millville, NJ, in the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Earl Musser and Father Thomas Smith officiating.

Ridley-Rohrer: Terri, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Rohrer, Lancaster, Pa., and Donald, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Ridley Sr., Pavilion, NY, June 11 in the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Eber Dourte and Rev. Ken Letner officiating.

Rohrbaugh-Leeds: Holly, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Leeds Sr., Ephrata, Pa., and Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Rohrbaugh, East Petersburg, Pa., Feb. 26, in the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Merle Brubaker officiating.

Roof-Thurston: Janet June Thurston and Douglas R. Roof, Sept. 17, in the Mt. Holly Springs Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ernest U. Dohner officiating.

Sherfey-Benjamin: Lori, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Benjamin, and John Sherfey, Oct. 1.

Shue-Charles: Gloria, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. Melvin Charles, Washington Boro, Pa., and Steve, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Shue, Manheim, Pa., Aug. 27, in the Lancaster Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Merle Brubaker officiating.

Sisco-Monroe: Meredythe Trent, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Monroe, from Georgia, and David Lynn, son of Rev. and Mrs. Jay E. Sisco, Nappanee, In., Oct. 15, in the Citadel Square Bap-

tist Church, Charleston, S.C., with Dr. A. Stuart Arnold and the father of the groom officiating.

Smith-Moyer: Darla Fay Moyer and Douglas Lynn Smith, Sept. 2, in the Allenberry Playhouse Gardens with Rev. Ernest U. Dohner officiating.

Stuart-Oldengarm: Henrietta, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Oldengarm, Gorrie, Ont., and Gregory Stuart, Teeswater, Ont., Sept. 24, in the Lutheran Church, Hanover, Ont. with Rev. Luther Bauer officiating.

Vongphachank-Bouabane: Chantome, daughter of Ko Leng Hong, British Columbia, and Bouavanh, (who has lived with Mr. and Mrs. Claude Winger, Ridgeway, Ont.) Oct. 8, in the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Ross Nigh and the bride's brother-in-law, Somdy Bouabane, officiating.

Wesch-Stover: Teresa, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Stover, Mountville, Pa., and Richard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wesch Sr., Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 20 in the Zion United Church of Christ, Millersville, with Rev. Merle Brubaker officiating.

Obituaries

Clouse: Mrs. Hazel E. Clouse, Nappanee, In., born Nov. 15, 1895, in Union Twp. In., died Oct. 7, 1983, in the LuAnn Nursing Home. She was the daughter of John F. and Orvilla (Stiver) Stump. On March 29, 1983, she was married to Charles Clouse who preceded her in death on Dec. 15, 1966. She is survived by two daughters; Frieda and Vera Beachy; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. A son, LaMar, four brothers; and a sister preceded her in death. She was a member of the Brethren in Christ Church. Rev. Jay Sisco conducted the funeral service with interment in the South Union Cemetery.

Diehl: Earl John Diehl, State College, Pa., died July 11, 1983, at the age of 66. He was married to Nettie Viola Kegg Diehl who survives. He is also survived by a daughter, Margaret Viola Hess; a son, John A.; and a grandson. Rev. Blain Kauffman conducted the funeral service.

Heisey: Kathryn R. Heisey, Mt. Joy, Pa., born Sept. 15, 1903, died Aug. 30, 1983. She was married to Warren Heisey who preceded her in death in 1979. She is survived by a son, Bernell; and a sister, Fannie Rettew. She was a member of the Cross Roads Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Dale H. Engle, Rev. Benjamin E. Thuma, Rev. Allon B. Dourte, and Rev. Paul W. McBeth. Interment was in the Cross Roads Cemetery.

Williams: Alberta Williams, Loysburg, Pa., died Aug. 15, 1983, at the age of 77. She was married to Mark Williams who preceded her in death. She is survived by two sons: Mark Jr. and Garey; and two daughters: Donna Boida and Sharon Ramsey. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Blain Kauffman.

Wright: Nellie Myrtle Wright, born May 11, 1896, died Sept. 6, 1983. She is survived by four children: Lloyd, Anna, Paul and Ralph. She was preceded in death by two husbands: Rev. Earl Bossert and Charles Wright. Two children also preceded her in death: Clarence and Wilson. Rev. Ross Nigh, Rev. Arthur Heise, and Rev. Douglas Moore conducted the funeral service. Interment was in the Black Creek Cemetery.

Messiah College News

Messiah College-Africa

The college's joint effort with Daystar Communications in Nairobi, Kenya, will enroll approximately 25 students in the first class next April. Lois Beck, Assistant Professor of French at Messiah, is presently serving at Daystar to help begin the new program which will grant Messiah College degrees.

Campaign Report

As of October 20, 1983, the focus on Wholeness fund drive for the restoration of Old Main, the construction of a fitness center, and endowment for student scholarships stood at the \$4.7 million mark, leaving a balance of \$2.8 million to be raised toward the \$7.5 million goal.

Financial Aid

Ron Long reports that 81 percent of

Messiah's students are receiving approximately \$5 million in financial aid this year. Sixty percent of this financial aid is self-help (loans and/or employment) and 40 percent is gift aid (grants, scholarships, and/or tuition discounts).

Who's Who

Becky Engle, Abilene, Kansas, and Cindy Robinson, Ellitsburg, Pennsylvania, were named to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges* for the 1983-84 school year. They were selected by a faculty/student committee, giving consideration to scholarship, citizenship, character, and leadership.

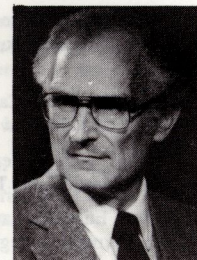
Alumnus Honored

The Messiah College Alumni Association presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award to Dr. Owen H. Alderfer at Homecoming time. The citation follows:

Owen H. Alderfer, the Messiah college Alumni Association is pleased to recognize your significant accomplishments as educator and church leader by presenting to you the 1983 Distinguished

Alumnus Award.

Thirty years of involvement in education attest to your love for teaching. Institutions benefitting from your academic expertise have included Upland College, Ashland Theological Seminary, and presently, Messiah College. You are noted among your colleagues as having particular command in the discipline of church history and are also well-versed in theology, ethics, and contemporary church life. Your ability as educator has been recognized several times, most notably in 1970, in being named among Outstanding Educators of America, and in 1980, becoming the first occupant of Messiah College's C. N. Hostetter, Jr. Chair of Theology. You are presently serving as departmental chairman of Religion and Philosophy at Messiah College.



Owen Alderfer

You are deeply committed to the Christian faith and have dedicated yourself to service within your denomination—the Brethren in Christ. Many in the denomination consider you as a leader who has helped maintain the heritage of the church as well as promoting vision for tomorrow. You have held the Brethren's highest executive post, General Conference Secretary, from 1963 to 1973, fulfilling the maximum allowable term of office. Presently, you continue to serve as president of the denomination's Historical Society and as chairman of its Ministerial Credentials Board. In the near future, with God's blessing, you will undertake yet another significant denominational position, that of Bishop.

Owen H. Alderfer, a primary goal for you has been to prepare persons for ministry. You love people and care deeply for their development and maturity. A sensitivity to the emotional and spiritual conditions of others is one of your gifts. You are a responsive person who has encouraged and challenged many to vocations of ministry and service.

The integration of faith and learning is a key—and oftentimes overworked—phrase among Christian education circles. But your life vocation has certainly marked a personal commitment to this ideal of blending intellect and soul. For these reasons, we are pleased to honor you as the Distinguished Alumnus of 1983.

Give a gift that will be remembered . . .

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Yellow Ribbon Edition (Books #73-200 available)	200

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the contemporary scene

Researcher says cults are strong where traditional church is weak

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (EP)—Religious cults and sects will be strongest where traditional religions are weakest, says University of Washington sociologist Rodney Stark in a Religious News Service report.

The truth of that principle proves itself on the West Coast, where church membership is among the lowest in the country and cult activity high, he says, comparing a recent nationwide survey of church membership that ranked the state 48th with his own survey that put Washington in 11th place in cult activity.

Participation in religious sects and cults—groups characterized by teachings that depart from the doctrines of traditional churches—is even higher in California and Oregon, he says. While California ranks 46th in church membership, it ranks third in the number of cults per million residents. Oregon is 45th in church membership, but sixth in cults.

Generally included in the grouping of cults and sects are “new religions” such as Baha’i, transcendental meditation, astrology, and Mormonism. They are called “new” because their teaching adds to or replaces the doctrines of older religions, such as Christianity.

Prof. Stark said the popularity of cults on the West Coast (Washington, Oregon, and California) runs counter to the popular sociological notion that growing secularization would water down and eventually wipe out religious faith. One might think that new religions would be strongest where the old, more established religions are also strong. The idea would be: “You sell religions to religious people, like you sell books to readers,” Dr. Stark said. But the sociology professor has found that the new religions flourish where there is strong allegiance to a “no religion” preference. In surveys, Dr. Stark has found that people who say they have no religious preference are the most likely to believe in astrology, transcendental meditation, or spiritualism—communicating with the dead.

In addition, West Coast attitudes on the importance of praying or in general believe in God nearly match national averages, Dr. Stark said. Instead of meaning they have no religion, these people are saying, “I haven’t got a standard brand.” This finding surprised him because he had been interpreting the high percentage of West Coast residents with a “no religion” preference as being non-religious. “Church attendance slumps a lot on the West Coast, but nothing else,” he said. “What you do find is that the people who are unchurched are not irreligious. That’s what makes them available for some new kind of

religion.”

Dr. Stark said liberal Protestant denominations have weakened and suffered membership losses, in part, from increasing secularization of religious faiths. “It seems to me that new religions can only rise as there is a market weakness or market opportunity provided by that which is already in place,” he said. “The natural tendency is for religious organizations to get less other-worldly over time. As that happens, the most typical response is that a sect breaks away.”

Hatfield remains steady voice of faith in political arena

WASHINGTON (EP)—A constant thread runs through Mark Hatfield’s approaches to the issues he faces as an Oregon Republican, a third term U.S. Senator and chairman of deacons at Georgetown Baptist Church—faith in Jesus Christ.

He calls for “a spiritual renaissance in which people learn the biblical values of life—the dignity of the individual, the sacredness of creation and stewardship over resources for the glory of God and for the needs of the people.” Because of the economic future, the arms race, the continued disintegration of the family unit, an increase in crime and problems with drugs, people have been challenged to recognize God is sovereign, he said in an interview in his Senate office.

Even though Hatfield believes the churches could do more to help needy Americans economically, with more efficiency and humaneness than can the government, he has devoted more than 30 years to political service. “We are not called to any one effort,” he explains. “We are called to be the living presence of Christ wherever we are.” However, he added, “It would be far more effective if we could stimulate the churches and synagogues of this country to affirm their spiritual commitments by the way they relate to people in need. But the government is preempting the resources of people through taxation and regulation, diminishing people’s capacities to meet each other’s needs, neighbor to neighbor.”

The government responds to political ideologies instead of to the needs of people, he observed. “Our perspective of the world, in particular the Soviet Union, has become so myopic that we continue to escalate our abilities to be more efficient in the potential destruction of life. We are much more willing to create instruments of war than instruments of peace.”

Because of his belief that the escalating arms race is an overemphasized federal spending priority, Hatfield has initiated efforts to limit nuclear and chemical weap-

ons. Last year he became a primary sponsor of the nuclear freeze proposal. As one of the earliest opponents of the Vietnam War during his tenure as governor of Oregon, he cast the only dissenting vote on the issue at the 1965 and 1966 Governor’s Conferences.

To Hatfield, peace is more than the absence of war. It is “shalom,” a Hebrew word meaning total fulfillment of the individual. “May your heart be filled with joy . . . may your soul be filled with the peace of the Lord.” He views peace as a product of one’s spiritual commitment. “That is how one survives in this life. I do not know how people can survive without that in dwelling support and love.”

Mutually halting the escalation of the nuclear arms race and then reducing arsenals is the only hope for political peace, he believes. “Our hopes for tranquility between nations depend on reducing the capacity to wage war.” Hatfield expresses admiration for “those in the historic peace churches” who refuse military service. He points to the history of early Christian pacifism prevalent through the fourth century.

A Christian may justify acts of civil disobedience only “if there is no violence and if you are willing to take the consequences,” he reasoned. During the Vietnam War, Hatfield had considered withholding war taxes to protest U.S. involvement. “There are situations in which in order to say ‘yes’ to God, you have to say ‘no’ to Caesar. But you must be willing to take the penalty.”

Struggling to maintain his priorities in the political art of compromise, Hatfield experiences frustration but said he had never “traded principle for pragmatism. I think we can have diversity of viewpoint without rupturing our relationships. Maintaining working relationships in no way means you are compromising your principles.”

Hatfield prays about his political positions but does not think his views are ordained by God. “I do not feel called to the role of speaking prophecy. As one studies the Word, as one lives his life, the prophetic word comes in a natural, normal manner.”

The gospel is both a message of redemption and a mission of reconciliation, even though those two factors are often divided, Hatfield said. “The evangelical churches are awakening to a social consciousness. Our maturation process as Christians must involve reaching out to impact the whole community in acts that affirm the words of witness.”

Currently the fifth ranking Republican in seniority and fourteenth in the full Senate, Hatfield is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He also serves on the Rules and Administration Committee, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, the Joint Committee on Printing and Joint Committee on the Library. Although for the past two years his legislative concerns have primarily been economic, Hatfield has been a leader in congressional efforts to combat world hunger and raise human rights issues.

readers respond

To be considered for publication, letters must be signed and should be 300 words or less.

What happened?

What happened? The September issue of the *Visitor* (the evangelism issue, distributed as samples throughout the church) is the first issue I have ever seen worth reading, except one or maybe two articles. But this issue is full of tear-moving articles. My, what good, stirring reading.

Now I would not expect all these articles in every issue. But there are stirring writers out there and available.

If the church is to move people through (to?—ed.) Jesus, then let's let the spirited messages get in the *Visitor* to us. Then I'll subscribe again.

(Former reader,
West Coast)

On letter-writing

The October issue arrived yesterday. The first three articles on "letters" were especially interesting. I could hardly put

the paper down. I'm looking forward to another three years of good reading. (A check for a three-year renewal was enclosed—ed.)

M. Lillian Buckwalter
Conestoga, PA

I was much impressed by the first three articles in the October *Visitor* concerning letter writing. Now I write many letters, perhaps not as many as our

Onesimus

Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you . . . will tell you everything that is happening here.

Colossians 4:9

Dear Paul:

Food, work, rest, celebration. These rhythms, imbedded in our life cycles, form the fabric of living. It's the celebration phase of life's rhythms that I'm questioning this time.

Moses organized a series of feasts to help the children of Israel celebrate their peoplehood and learn what it meant to be the people of God. The stories about Jesus show him participating in these celebrations and identifying with his people. It was an important part of his life.

You were at the cutting edge of change. Rather than majoring on the traditional Jewish feasts, you taught us gentile believers to celebrate by meeting together in each other's homes. Thus the new disciples learned their peoplehood (the new people of God) in those joyous intimate celebrations in out-of-the-way places.

But here, in this place and time, things are different. Consider the celebration of birthdays. The focus of birthday celebrations is on the individual, and I don't find much scriptural guidance for that.

These events are nice but they certainly don't take the place of what you and Moses taught. The disquieting aspect for me in celebrating the individual is its entanglement with material things. For the most part, as practiced today, the more wealth, the more celebration; the less wealth; the less celebration.

Perhaps the celebration of Jesus' birthday (Christmas) has come to symbolize the dilemma of modern day celebration. From the beautiful act of the Wise Men has come the idea of gifts—and that idea has been captured by merchants and consumers as the essence of Christmas. Result: we spend inordinate amounts of time, energy, and money to buy gifts for individuals. Often the exercise is so exhausting it affects our celebration of Jesus' birth.

Our dilemma is compounded by the fact that, more and more, our very way of life is tied to the demands of the marketplace. Many people make their living making, advertising and, selling gifts—useful and otherwise. Too often our gifts smother our celebrations.

Perhaps you and Moses still have something important to teach us about celebration. It's something we do together, rejoicing in our peoplehood as the children of God. In essence, celebration has nothing to do with buying and selling. Is that conclusion scriptural?

—Onesimus

SCRIPTURES to live by '83

Thursday, Dec. 1 • Acts 18:12-19:41;
Ephesians 1, 2
Friday, Dec. 2 • Ephesians 3-6
Saturday, Dec. 3 • Romans 1-3
Sunday, Dec. 4 • Psalms 138-140
Monday, Dec. 5 • Romans 4-6
Tuesday, Dec. 6 • Romans 7-9
Wednesday, Dec. 7 • Romans 10-12
Thursday, Dec. 8 • Romans 13-16
Friday, Dec. 9 • Acts 20-22
Saturday, Dec. 10 • Acts 23-25
Sunday, Dec. 11 • Psalms 141-143
Monday, Dec. 12 • Acts 26-28
Tuesday, Dec. 13 • Colossians

Wednesday, Dec. 14 • Hebrews 1-4
Thursday, Dec. 15 • Hebrews 5-8
Friday, Dec. 16 • Hebrews 9-11
Saturday, Dec. 17 • Hebrews 12-13;
Titus
Sunday, Dec. 18 • Psalms 144-146
Monday, Dec. 19 • Philemon; 1
Timothy
Tuesday, Dec. 20 • 2 Timothy
Wednesday, Dec. 21 • 1 Peter
Thursday, Dec. 22 • 1 John
Friday, Dec. 23 • 2 Peter 2; 3 John;
Jude
Saturday, Dec. 24 • Revelation 1-4
Sunday, Dec. 25 • Psalms 147-150
Monday, Dec. 26 • Revelation 5:1-8:5
Tuesday, Dec. 27 • Revelation
8:6-11:19
Wednesday, Dec. 28 • Revelation
12, 13
Thursday, Dec. 29 • Revelation 14-16
Friday, Dec. 30 • Revelation 17-19
Saturday, Dec. 31 • Revelation 20-22

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NEXT MONTH—Onesimus I is "revealed" and Onesimus II picks up the pen.

Evangelical Visitor

Brother Landis. I feel that it was wonderful for the young woman to write to her father on his wedding anniversary, even though the mother was in glory. These special days are hard for us who have lost a loved one—at least, they are for me. From now on, I'm going to be more thoughtful of my friends on these special days, and when sickness prevails, too . . .

Hannah Foote
Upland, CA

Family focus

What more appropriate time to write than after reading the October issue with several articles on letter writing. Having been encouraged by the four articles on marriage by Ruth Dourte, I want to thank you for printing these. I appreciate your giving space to this current need in our congregation as well as others, I suspect.

As a deacon, I have become more aware of the importance of providing help for troubled marriages as a means of prevention, both for ourselves and our brothers and sisters. How can we carry on the task of the Church or even equip the members of the Body when our emotional energies are so torn and twisted, merely surviving at home? For any who takes time to listen, the world and the church need our love and help in "home building" and even "remodeling."

(Mrs.) Wanda L. Heise
Harrisburg, PA.

U.S. Postal Service STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685			
1. TITLE OF PUBLICATION	2. PUBLICATION NO.	3. DATE OF FILING	
Evangelical Visitor	180300	9-12-83	
4. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE	5A. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY	5B. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE	
Monthly	12	\$7.00	
6. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OR FILED PUBLICATION (Street, Box, County, State and ZIP Code) (For parent)			
301 North Elm Street, Nappanee, Elkhart Co., IN 46550			
7. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHER (For parent)			
301 North Elm Street, Nappanee, Elkhart Co., IN 46550			
8. FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR (For item MUST NOT be more)			
PUBLISHER (Name and Complete Mailing Address)			
Evangel Press, 301 North Elm Street, Nappanee, IN 46550			
EDITOR (Name and Complete Mailing Address)			
Glen A. Pierce, 301 North Elm Street, Nappanee, IN 46550			
MANAGING EDITOR (Name and Complete Mailing Address)			
Glen A. Pierce, 301 North Elm Street, Nappanee, IN 46550			
9. OWNER (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a proprietor, his name and address must be stated if there must be completed.)			
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editorial

The heart of Christmas

I confess. I really enjoy many of the traditional customs and activities surrounding Christmas as it is celebrated in North America.

Along with Christmas cantatas and carols, I like such songs as "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" or "I'll be home for Christmas." I look forward to the Christmas programs at school and at church, and even those few, well-done holiday specials on television. Although I don't buy much, I enjoy going shopping for those half-dozen special gifts for special people. I read with interest mimeographed letters from people we haven't seen for years, happy to learn about the escapades and achievements of the children, the dog, and mom and dad. I even enjoy (after the work is done) unsnarling the strings of miniature lights and figuring out just which one of those 50 bulbs really is burned out, thereby keeping the whole set from lighting up the artificial Christmas tree we bought a decade ago at a clearance sale.

I must report, however, that there is more interest in our home in getting out the manger scene than there is in putting up the Christmas tree. There's a lot of history in our manger scene. We found the ivory-colored plastic figures in a little San Francisco bookstore our first Christmas as newlyweds. I made the stable from sticks and grass collected on the Messiah College campus, before any of our three children were born. Fingerprints on the figures bear silent witness of small children spending hours rearranging Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the sheep, the camel and the wisemen.

And the gifts we most enjoy giving are those which haven't cost much money, but which represent our time and energy—some of Linda's macrame or crewel artistry, something from my workshop, or a loaf of the orange cinnamon bread we bake only at Christmas.

Certainly, there are some traditions which we have avoided as a family. For example, we've always told the children, when they asked, that Santa Claus is not real (although I'm not convinced that a young child's temporary interest in Santa is any more dangerous than reading children's stories about bears who talk with golden-haired girls, or a wooden marionette whose nose grows every time he tells a lie). Still, I haven't felt called to lead a crusade against Santa; in our house, we leave that to Douglas, our middle child. (One day in Kindergarten class, he decided to debunk the Santa Claus myth. Apparently he was quite persuasive, for one of the parents called Linda to complain about our son "ruining" their children's Christmas!)

I imagine that most *Visitor* readers would agree that very few of the world's festivities at Christmas reflect a genuine appreciation of Christ's birth. But is it possible that we, too, may miss much of the real significance of Christmas if we focus only on the emotion-stirring stories surrounding the Nativity? How easy it is to get caught up in sentimentalities about the "no vacancy" sign over the inn door, the little baby peacefully sleeping on the hay. But the life-changing reality of the Incarnation is much more than shepherds and sheep, wisemen and stars, stables and mangers. The heart of Christmas is this:

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

May that reality bring new life and joy into your Christmas celebrations this year. And may it encourage you and me to move beyond the warm circle of family and friends, sharing God's Love Gift—our Lord Jesus Christ—with those who are still enemies of God and strangers to his love.

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THE ARCHIVES C
MESSIAH COLLEGE
GRANTHAM PA 17027

Information for 1984 General Conference

The 1984 General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church will convene at Messiah College on Saturday, June 30, with the first business session at 1 p.m. The final session is scheduled to end at noon on Thursday, July 5.

Housing: Two single beds in each room . . . \$8.50 per person per night in non-air-conditioned rooms, \$11.50 per night in air-conditioned rooms, on a first come, first served basis . . . Beds for children eight and under, half price . . . Children on floor in parents' room, no charge.

Camping: Campsites available near showers and restrooms. No hookups or tables provided, and none of the following permitted: fires, cooking, or trenching around tents. Rates are \$5.00 per unit per night.

Meals: The meal ticket package is \$10.50 per day, children 5-8 half price, 4 and under free. Individual tickets: Breakfast \$3.00, Lunch \$4.00, and Dinner \$5.00; children 5-8, half these rates. The college also has a snack bar.

Registration Fee: A registration fee will be charged everyone 18 years old and over attending day sessions at Conference, both Conference Members and non-conference members. The fee is \$16 per person or \$4 a day, whichever is less.

Child Care: The General Conference will have activities for children through age 11 without charge for most of the sessions of Conference. More details later. However, *please note*. Congregations who send both parents of young children as delegates should give careful consideration to the inconveniences involved in the above; it is not easy for such parents to fit into the drop-off and pick-up schedules, especially when sessions run late.

Registration at Conference will be on Friday, June 29, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and on Saturday, June 30, from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Pre-Registration: Forms for pre-registration will be published in the January 1984 issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* along with more detailed information. Please do

not attempt to register before that time. The deadline for pre-registration is May 20, 1984.

For more information, contact the Convention Director, Paul Hostetler, Grantham, PA 17027; Phone (717) 766-2621. If no answer, call 766-8914 and leave a message.

Missions Convention Information

Brethren in Christ Missions is holding its first denomination-wide Missions Convention during the two days prior to the 1984 General Conference. (See page 15 for highlights of the convention.) Registration for this convention must be done at the *same time* and on the *same form* as the General Conference registration. You will receive *one* bill for room, board and registration for both the conference and the convention. This bill must be completely paid with *one check* prior to the Missions Convention.

There is no registration fee for the Missions Convention. The cost for meals and rooms is the same per unit as that of General Conference. For those lodging at Messiah College, a working cost figure (package plan) would be \$38 - \$44 - \$50. This includes two nights' lodging and six meals.

Registration will be on Wednesday, June 27, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The convention will convene at 9:00 a.m. Thursday and close Friday at 4:30 p.m.

Transportation to and from airports will be provided by the General Conference staff. Children's programs for children through age 11 will be held during the convention.